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“We're Still Here!” Minority Language Music and the Politics of Survival- A Comparative Study of the Basque, Frisian and Welsh Minorities in Contemporary Perspective

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MA Programme Euroculture

Declaration

I, Genevieve Wickenden, hereby declare that this thesis, entitled "We're Still Here! Minority Language Music and the Politics of Survival- A Comparative Study of the Basque, Frisian and Welsh Minorities in Contemporary Perspective" submitted as partial requirement for the MA Programme Euroculture, is my own original work and expressed in my own words. Any use made within it of works of other authors in any form (e.g. ideas, figures, texts, tables, etc.) are properly acknowledged in the text as well as in the List of References.

I hereby also acknowledge that I was informed about the regulations pertaining to the assessment of the MA thesis Euroculture and about the general completion rules for the Master of Arts Programme Euroculture.

Signed Genevieve Wickenden

Date 31 December 2009

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List of Abbreviations

CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis (theory)
CMW	Community Music Wales
CoE	Council of Europe
ECRML	European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages
EMC	European Music Council
ETA	Euskadi Ta Askatasuna
EU	European Union
IRA	Irish Republican Army
Liet	Liet International Song Contest
MERCATOR	European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning
NSM	New Social Movement (theory)
PNV	Partido Nacionalista Vasca/Basque Nationali Party
UNESCO	United Nations Educational and Scientific Cultural Organization
VOE	Voices of Europe
WLS	The Welsh Language Society
YEN	Youth of European Nationalities

Chapter 1- Introduction to the Topic

*We're still here
We're still here
In spite of everything
In spite of everyone
We're still here*¹

While these lyrics are no doubt more inspiring in their native Welsh, they are a stirring testament to the sheer will of minority languages to survive despite widespread oppression, marginalisation and threat of extinction under the rule of majority cultures. According to the Council of Europe, minority languages are defined as those which are:

- i) Traditionally used within a given territory of a State by nationals of that State who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the State's population; and
- ii) Different from the official language(s) of that State.²

Following this definition, there are 38 minority languages in Europe.³ This figure does not include languages now present due to recent trends in immigration, but refers to those autochthonous to Europe itself.⁴ It is important to mention however, that minority groups are definable in more than merely a numeric sense. Perhaps a more accurate definition would describe minority languages as social groups that “lack the political, institutional and ideological structures” that are necessary in order to guarantee the maintenance of those languages “in the everyday life of their members.”⁵ In the case of minority language groups therefore, the prefix ‘minority’ pertains more to power than demographic strength.⁶

¹ Dafydd Iwan, “Still Here” (Yma o Hyd), 1981 [Online] <http://dafyddiwan.com/english/index.html> (accessed 21 May, 2009).

² Article 1- European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages,” 5 November, 1992, Council of Europe [Online] <http://conventions.coe.int/treaty/en/Treaties/Html/148.htm> (accessed 1 May, 2009).

³ Daniela Warwa, “United in Diversity: British and German Minority Language Policies in the Context of European Language Policy,” Language and Intercultural Communication 6, No. 3 & 4 (2006), 221.

⁴ Ibid, 221.

⁵ Glyn Williams, *Sustaining Language Diversity in Europe: Evidence from the Euromosaic Project*, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 1.

⁶ Williams, 1.

With 10% of the population speaking a minority language as their mother tongue, the linguistic richness of Europe is well-worth preserving.⁷ The commitment to support minority languages is illustrated in the formation of various international documents including The United Nation's Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious or Linguistic Minorities (1992), The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1992) and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995). It is also demonstrated in the official motto of the European Union, "United in Diversity", and has been the focus of various EU-wide campaigns and declarations, for example, the European Year of Languages in 2001. Despite the protection (or in some cases, the illusion of it) offered by these treaties and international documents, many minority languages remain under threat due to the standardisation of media, globalisation, and above all, pressures exerted by majority cultures. In fact, a recent study from the United Nations Educational and Scientific Cultural Organization (UNESCO) suggests that half of the world's 6,000 languages are in danger of extinction.⁸ While the future does look bleak for many minority languages and cultures, some have managed to maintain their identity in spite of the forces working against them. This pattern is exhibited by the Basque people of Spain and France, the West Frisians of The Netherlands and the Welsh minority in the United Kingdom. Their ability to weather such pressure is a testament to "the continued social relevance of minority identity."⁹ Moreover, in spite of historical, political and social marginalisation by majority cultures, the Basque, Frisian and Welsh minorities have not only survived, but are experiencing what can only be labelled as a cultural renaissance. This revival is nowhere more visible than in their contemporary musical culture.

⁷ Alexander Caviedes, "The Role of Language in Nation-Building within the European Union," *Dialectical Anthropology* 27 (2003), 252.

⁸ Sophie Boukhari, "Linguistic diversity: 3,000 languages in danger," July, 2002, *UNESCO Press Release*, [Online] http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=1864&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html (accessed 8 May, 2009).

⁹ Thomas Hylland Eriksen, "Linguistic Hegemony and Minority Resistance," *Journal of Peace Research* 29, No. 3 (August 1992), 315.

Music is one of the most visible and reflective components of any culture. It is both a product of society and an actor within; it is “what makes a culture breathe, what sustains it.”¹⁰ While music can be appreciated for its aesthetic value alone, within academic circles, it is the subject of much debate. Academics have begun to see music as grounds for symbolic and cultural meaning, as it is both a site of discourse and a medium of it. Music moreover, is an ally of the oppressed, as it provides a vehicle to express the need for change and a means to document and call attention to their struggle. In this sense, music can be used as an open act of defiance against the majority, “symbolizing a much larger pattern of resistance.”¹¹ It is widely understood that music is also a mobilising force that can be harnessed as a survival mechanism for marginalised cultures. Music therefore, is a cultural product that can permeate far beyond its original audience, becoming more than pure aesthetic.

The purpose of this study is to illustrate the musical revival in minority languages, and what this means for the survival of the Basque, Frisian and Welsh people. This work will examine trends in contemporary minority language music using specific examples from the ‘Basque Radical Rock’, ‘Cool Cymru’ and Frisian music scenes. Qualitative data will be used to determine the influence of music in its ability to preserve, promote and politicize the struggles of the Basque, Frisian and Welsh minority groups.

Chapter 1.1- Area of Research

Questions of nationalism and the ‘nation-state’, as well as the ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural minorities that (supposedly) undermine them, have been at the forefront of academic research in the social sciences since the end of the Second World War. Indeed the literature in this area is so extensive that one researcher contends that it exceeds in size “the entire lore of human geography.”¹² A ‘nation-state’ can be defined as a

¹⁰ Emyllt Williams, Interview by author, Olomouc, Czech Republic, November 25th, 2009.

¹¹ Sarah Hill, *Blerwytirhwng?: The Place of Welsh Pop Music*, Ashgate Popular and Folk Music Series, (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007), 9.

¹² Marvin W. Mikesell and Alexander B. Murphy, “A Framework for Comparative Study of Minority-Group Aspirations,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 81, no. 4 (December 1991), 582.

political entity based on the belief in a shared history, culture and language.¹³ The ideal state was one that embodied a single, cultural nation. Nationalism was used in order to bind the ‘nation’ and the ‘state’ together as one, by overcoming local ethnic and cultural diversity that compromised this ideal. It was the pressures of nationalism within the nation-state which “threatened the permanent loss of distinctive minority cultures.”¹⁴

While the concepts of ‘nation-state’ and ‘nationalism’ have historically been the primary concerns of academics, recently, much research has been focused on minority groups excluded by these forces. Within a nation-state, minorities experience overt pressures, which over time, may result in acculturation. Defined as the systematic loss of one’s own cultural and linguistic distinctiveness through the adoption of the prevailing majority, acculturation has become a new focal point for social scientists.¹⁵ Perhaps the seminal work in this area is Joshua Fishman’s *Reversing the Language Shift: Theoretical and Empirical Assistance to Threatened Languages* (1991). Fishman’s treatise has become a mainstay in the field, as he provides guidelines on ways in which minority languages can be revitalised for the benefit of future generations. He argues that “the destruction of a language is the destruction of a rooted identity”, and offers specific proposals in order to reverse this process.¹⁶ While Joshua Fishman is certainly not the first to write on the disappearance of minority languages, his work has inspired a flurry of like-minded research. Indeed, it can be argued that Fishman influenced a global concern for minority languages, arguably at the crucial moment when they needed it the most.

As for the focal minority groups of this study, namely the Basque people of Spain and France, the West Frisians of the Netherlands and the Welsh in the United Kingdom, each group has been the subject of academic discourse, albeit some more comprehensively than others. The Basque people of Spain and Southern France are arguably one of the most recognised of Europe’s minority groups. This is due to the fact that they, along with the

¹³ Roland Axtmann, “The State of the State: The Model of the Modern State and Its Contemporary Transformation,” *International Political Review* 25, No. 3 (July 2004), 260.

¹⁴ Janet Mary Penrose, “The Role of Political Activism in the Preservation of Frisian Ethnicity in the Netherlands,” (PhD Dissertation, University of Toronto, 1989), i.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, i.

¹⁶ Joshua Fishman, *Reversing the Language Shift: Theoretical and Empirical Foundations of Assistance to Threatened Languages*, (Toronto: Multilingual Matters Ltd, 1991), 4.

Irish minority, have fringe factions, namely the Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) and the Irish Republican Army (IRA) that have historically been politically vocal and violent. ETA is considered a terrorist organisation, and is responsible for numerous violent attacks in the name of self-determination. In part because of its notoriety, the Basque people are one of the most researched subjects in the minority cultural field. Much of the literature on the topic is focused on the emergence of Basque nationalism, political ideology and cultural identity. The works of J. Mansvelt-Beck, J.P. Linstroth and Meredith Weiss are all representative of these trends. The Welsh minority is another well-researched area. The main investigations for this group tend to be more varied in nature, including inquiries into Welsh education, political devolution, history and cultural identity. Moreover, while the Basque case is generally studied on its own, examinations into the Welsh situation may fuel comparisons to neighbouring Irish and Gaelic minorities. It can be argued that an increase in the academic research focused on the Welsh is part of a global revival of interest in all things 'Celtic'. The Frisian minority however, has comparatively little written in English, especially not in terms of their contemporary historical development. This being said, the European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning (MERCATOR) is located in the heart of Friesland. MERCATOR is responsible for a steady release of academic publications, including some on the Frisian minority. However, studies on Frisians tend to focus primarily on education and language demographics.

While research on the Basque, Frisian and Welsh minorities is by no means a novel idea, the area of minority language music is relatively nascent. It is only within the last decade that contemporary music from European minority groups has come to the fore of research. Yet even now, the field is relatively limited. There are some works which have been published on the Cool Cymru music scene, namely Sarah Hill's excellent account of the industry, *Blewytirhwng?: The Place of Welsh Pop Music*. Other works tend to focus on either the economic side of the Welsh music industry, such as "*Sain Cymru: the role of the Welsh phonographic industry in the development of Welsh language pop/rock/folk scene*" by Roger Wallis and Krister Malm, or highlight the participation of youth within the movement, such as Meic Llewellyn's "*Popular music in the Welsh Language and the Affirmation of Youth Identities.*" The Basque Radical Rock scene has received relatively

the same amount of academic interest as its Welsh equivalent. The main works in this area have focused on the connection between the music scene and nationalist politics. The work of Christian Lahusen, *“The Aesthetics of Radicalism: The Relationship between Punk and the Patriotic Nationalism Movement of the Basque Country”* and Jacqueline Urla’s *“We are Malcolm X: Negu Gorriak, Hip-Hop and the Basque Political Imaginary”* are examples of this trend. Conversely, the Frisian music scene has been comparatively untouched by scholars. The only works that the author is aware of are written in the Dutch language, and are therefore not readily accessible to most academics. Due to the relative newness of the topic, there remains much left unexplored. In particular, there is no overarching analysis of how minority language music functions beyond the region in which it is created. Nor is there any in depth examination which focuses on the underlying objectives of minority language music beyond the aesthetic.

Chapter 1.2- Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are 1) to provide a comprehensive understanding of the minority language music scene in the Basque, Frisian and Welsh experiences from an historical and contemporary perspective; 2) to compare and contrast the use of minority language music to facilitate the preservation of language, the promotion of culture and the politicisation of issues within these divergent musical milieus; and 3) to analyse what is being done within the European Union to promote minority languages through music. To this end, attention will be made to the Liet International Song Contest, Voices of Europe choir and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. It is hoped that the combination of these goals will allow for an accurate portrayal of the contemporary Basque, Frisian and Welsh language music scenes, and what it means for the future survival of these distinct cultures.

The challenge of this work and what makes it unique, is that this is the first comparison on minority language music using three different minorities as case studies. The purpose of this comparison is to contrast the different priorities, goals and developments within the Basque, Frisian and Welsh music scenes. This will also allow for an assessment of how minority language music of one region may (or may not) influence other groups.

Most importantly however, the purpose of minority language music, understood in this paper as the ability to preserve the language itself, promote its culture and politicise its goals, is examined using three different cultural groups and historical experiences.

The use of discourse analysis will be employed in order to gain a better understanding of music as platform of minority dialogue. This is an innovative approach to the subject as it allows for the reading of lyrics as symbolic of the strength of the minority group which they represent. Additionally, the minority language music scenes in the Basque Country, Friesland and Wales will be considered as social movements, as stipulated in the 'New Social Movement' theory, a post-Marxist approach to the understanding of collective actions. This theory will be useful in explaining the contextual growth of minority language music as it allows for a holistic understanding of the changing nature of the movement since the 1970s. Additionally, it will aid in understanding why the tone, subject and ideas behind this music seem to be changing. What is most important however, is that the emphasis of this work will be on collecting data from actual Basque, Frisian and Welsh musicians, and others working within the music industry. This will give the thesis an interesting first-hand perspective, not present or at least not overly emphasised in previous studies.

While this work will argue that music is used by minority groups as a method of preserving, promoting and politicising their cultural demands, it is proposed that the extent to which these concerns are equally weighted will change over time and differ between the three case studies. Specifically, one of the main ideas proposed by this paper is that the symbolic purpose of music as a medium of change will be transformed due to the shifting nature of regional politics, the influence of the European Union and the placement of the minority within the nation-state.

Chapter 1.3- Methodology

The main methodological approach of this paper is a qualitative analysis based on three main case studies, field research, as well as supplementary primary and secondary resources. As this thesis focuses on the meanings, perceptions and symbolic importance of minority language music to the Basque, Frisian and Welsh populations, a qualitative

analysis seems a natural fit to the body of work. Qualitative analysis will be approached by comparing the case studies within the field of minority language music. In order to grasp the past and current situation of minority groups, numerous historical and political sources were consulted. This knowledge provides a necessary backdrop from which to formulate a contemporary analysis of their current circumstances. Qualitative data is useful in acquiring a holistic and in-depth understanding of minority language music in its cultural as well as perceived social functions. For the ease of the reader, the data will be presented in graph form in order to recognise any differences or emerging trends within the Basque, Frisian and Welsh music scenes.

In addition to the case studies, field work in the form of surveys and interviews are used in order to gain a more complete perspective on minority language music in the Basque Country, Friesland and Wales. Using primarily www.myspace.com, as well as other cultural organisations specialising in music, surveys were sent to artists and bands from the three case minorities. The survey was an enquiry designed to understand: 1) the attachment to their respective minority; 2) the goal and message of their music; and 3) basic socio-linguistic information in terms of frequency of language use, educational background and regional identification. In addition to surveys posed to bands, various interviews were conducted with organisations linked with minority language and culture, including Community Music Wales, and the Liet International Song Contest. Finally, a selection of lyrics from minority language music artists will be analysed as contextual symbolism for the needs of the Basque, Frisian and Welsh minorities. Other sources to be used in this study include state statistics on minority groups, books, journal articles, as well as official national and international treaties such as the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

The approach of this study is both analytical and theoretical. An analysis of the current trends of minority language music will be made in reference to the surveys, interviews, song lyrics, secondary and primary resources, as well as observations made within the field of research. The theoretical approach will be constructed through the adoption of ‘New Social Movement Theory’ and ‘Critical Discourse Theory’. It is expected that the combination of these resources, research methods, as well as the inclusion of field-

work within the area of minority language music will satisfy the research questions presented in this study.

Chapter 1.4- Theoretical Framework

In order to provide an appropriate theoretical framework to this study, ‘New Social Movement Theory’ and ‘Critical Discourse Analysis Theory’ will be used. Both are relatively new ideas, and are well-regarded within the social sciences as excellent approaches to an understanding of social movements and the contextual meaning of language respectively.

New Social Movement Theory

New social movement theory (NSM) is the designation academics have given to the amalgam of philosophical concepts as presented by such renowned European theorists as Manuel Castells, Claus Offe, Alain Touraine, Alberto Melucci and Jürgen Habermas. New Social Movement Theory came about as traditional Marxist ideology failed to explain changing patterns of collective action.¹⁷ As their name suggests, new social movements since the 1960s differ from (old) social movements as their concerns shifted towards collective rights and freedoms. Former social movements however, focused their attentions on issues relating to the working class, articulating specific (usually) political or economic demands for the proletariat.¹⁸ Moreover, old social movements are focused on issues of class-cleavages from a left-right divide, while new social movements, work by “break[ing] down the conventional political divisions and organi[sing] across these cleavages.”¹⁹

What is vital to new social movements that was not emphasized in the past is the issue of identity. One of the most important proponents of NSM is Italian theorist, Alberto Melucci, who has written extensively on the subject since the 1980s. It is Melucci’s culturalist understanding of new social movement that will be used as the main backdrop for this work’s theoretical framework. For Melucci, the concept of identity is at the core of new social movements. He argues that social movements are formed by three integral parts:

¹⁷ Steven M. Buechler, “New Social Movement Theories,” *The Sociological Quarterly* 36, No. 3 (Summer 1995), 441.

¹⁸ Paul D’Anieri Claire Ernst and Elizabeth Kier, “New Social Movements in Historical Perspective,” *Comparative Politics* 22, No. 4 (July 1990), 447.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 452.

actor(s), an “identification of an adversary and an indication of ends, goals and objectives for which to fight.”²⁰ This idea translates to minority language music as the identity of the actor becomes the minority group in question, the adversary (usually) the state in which the minority resides, and the objective depends on the actor him/herself. Additionally, Melucci contends that the concept of identity is what gives NSM specific ‘orientations’ which provide focus to actors within the social movement. He argues that there are three orientations in new social movements. The first gives actors the direction of their action. The second orientation establishes the medium of the action to be undertaken. It also shows “the possibilities as well as the limits of their action.”²¹ The final orientation is the location of where the action takes place. The combination of these three orientations establishes the form, function, place and actors of new social movements.²² Identity, the core of any new social movement, “finds in society the conditions (resources) for its existences... stressing one’s identity signifies the actor’s seeking a direct response to personal needs through participation in collective action.”²³ This theory is useful in explaining the contextual growth of minority language music in the Basque Country, Friesland and Wales as it allows for a holistic understanding of the changing nature of the movement.

While traditionally new social movements have come to mean the advancement of environmentalism, feminism, gay liberation and civil rights,²⁴ this thesis will use NSM in order to understand the advancement of minority rights; specifically as representative of the Basque, Frisian and Welsh music movements. This is a natural extension of the theory of new social movement as academics believe it is framed with a concern for cultural rights.

²⁰ Alberto Melucci, “Liberation or Meaning? Social Movements, Culture and Democracy,” Development and Change 23, No. 3 (1992), 57.

²¹ Peyman Vahabzadeh, “A Critique of Ultimate Referentiality in the New Social Movement Theory of Alberto Melucci,” The Canadian Journal of Sociology 26, No. 4 (Autumn 2001), 618.

²² *Ibid*, 619.

²³ *Ibid*, 619.

²⁴ Edward J. Woodhouse and Steve Breyman, “Green Chemistry as Social Movement?” Science, Technology & Human Values 30, No. 2 (Spring 2005), 209.

Critical Discourse Analysis Theory

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a post-modernist theoretical concept that argues that society is infused with underlying ideas, beliefs and assumptions that inform all behaviour. In this way, societies can be viewed as ‘texts’ that represent the broader, underlying discourse or dialogue of the society as a whole. Therefore, what is created by a society can effectively represent the underlying discourse of the culture as a whole.²⁵

Norman Fairclough’s *Language and Power* (1989) is considered one of the key contributions to the understanding of critical discourse analysis. CDA is useful to this research as it allows for an underlying theoretical understanding of social artefacts, such as minority language music, as living products of the society in which they are created. In this sense, music can “never be innocent that is, ideology-free.”²⁶ Using critical discourse analysis allows for the treatment of music as a cultural narrative; a “fertile ground for investigating history and the historical power relationships that put people in their current socio-geographical space.”²⁷ Music as a narrative of minority discourse “can yield traces of past relationships between political, cognitive, and ideological hegemonies and patterns of resistance.”²⁸ This thesis will apply Norman Fairclough’s approach to critical discourse analysis as he provides a specific structure of textual analysis through the use of description, interpretation and explanation.²⁹ ‘Description’ is understood as the specific properties of the text itself. The second criterion, ‘interpretation’, is concerned with the process in which individuals “arrive at some kind of understanding of discourse on the basis of their cognitive, social and ideological resources.”³⁰ More specifically, it is the ability to see the text as both a creation of production and a resource for interpretation.³¹ Finally, through ‘explanation’ the researcher is able to reveal “the larger picture in which

²⁵ Jan Blomaert and Chris Bulcaen, “Critical Discourse Analysis,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 29 (2000), 458.

²⁶ Johann Visagie, “Applying Critical Tools to Critical Theory: With Some Remarks on the Implications for Musicology,” *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 36, No. 1 (June 2005), 29.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 458.

²⁸ Bloomaert, 458.

²⁹ Norman Fairclough, *Language and Power* Second Edition, (Essex: Pearson Education Limited, 2001), 26.

³⁰ Jan Bloomaert, *Discourse: A Critical Introduction*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 29

³¹ Fairclough, 21.

they derive meaning.”³² The use of CDA will allow for the analysis of minority language music, permitting its re-conceptualisation as an authentic medium of discourse.

Chapter 1.5-Scope and Limitations

This work will look at contemporary minority music as a vehicle for the preservation of language, promotion of culture and politicisation of three distinct peoples: the Basques, the (West) Frisians and the Welsh. The selection of these three minority groups is important as the choice of the case studies had to provide enough contrast to be valid from a research perspective, while being similar enough to warrant a genuine comparison. Firstly, all three are considered ‘stateless minorities’. This means that they have no kin state or mother country where their language is the primary means of communication. Therefore, they have no outside resource from which they can draw strength and support. Being without a kin state is a key issue in the field of minority preservation as it places the onus solely on the minority group itself to maintain their own language, culture and traditions. In terms of demographic differences, all three case studies are relatively similar in the number of individuals speaking the language, with no more than half a million mother tongue speakers. More importantly however, all three are strong minority groups that are very much aware of their own historical experiences, political position, and are mindful of their autonomy.

The scope of this work will be based on analyses of the historical, political and cultural experiences of the Basque, Frisian and Welsh minorities as they are reflected in their respective minority language music scenes. An inquiry into contemporary language music in the Basque Country, Friesland and Wales, will be centred on the contributions of specific artists and bands from the 1960s to the present day. Additionally, field work will be used to provide a more in depth assessment into the changing nature of the music scenes within the three case studies. In terms of geographic scope, the Basque historical and political experience will be examined from a Spanish perspective. However, field work for the Basque case will involve information taken from both the Spanish and French experiences. This is because the Basque minority is relatively unified despite geographic

³² Bloomaert, *Discourse*, 29.

boundaries. Conversely, while there are Frisian minority groups located outside the Netherlands, namely the North and Saterland Frisians in Northern Germany and Denmark, only experiences from Friesland itself will be used in this study. As the Welsh minority is isolated within Wales itself, the scope of this particular case study will be kept within its geographic borders.

Chapter 1.6 Structure of the Work

This work will be a systematic analysis of minority language music using the Basque, Frisian and Welsh experiences as case studies. Each case study will be discussed in its own separate chapter. Chapter 2 will be an analysis of the Basque minority, Chapter 3 is reserved for the discussion of the Frisian case and the Welsh minority will be examined in Chapter 4. Each of these chapters will contain a brief historical introduction to the minority and the region itself. This is crucial in contextualising the current situation of the minorities in question, including demographic and socio-linguistic changes within each region. Following this, the music scene in each minority will be analysed in terms of its abilities to preserve, promote, and politicise its language and culture. This analysis will be illustrated using specific songs from the music scenes of each culture, and will contain lyrical examinations within that minority genre. Finally, each case study will end with an examination of the results of the surveys conducted as part of the field work of this study. Chapter 5 will be the final chapter, and will contain an analysis and conclusion. It will include a discussion on projects within and outside the European Union that are committed to the use of music for the protection of minority languages, such as the Voices of Europe Choir, the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, and Liet International Song Competition. Chapter 5 will also interpret the findings of the Basque, Frisian and Welsh case studies to examine any emerging trends, similarities or differences, and the reasons for these variations. Finally, the conclusion will offer ideas on what may be the future of minority language music within the European Union.

Chapter 2-A Brief History of the Basque Country

Figure 1-Map of the Basque Country³³



Between the French and Spanish border on the Bay of Biscay, in the Western part of the Pyrenees Mountains, lies the subject of much confusion and discourse, the Basque Country (Euskal Herria).³⁴ There are approximately 2, 355, 000 Basque people, living primarily in Northern Spain and South Western France.³⁵ The Basque Country is defined geographically in terms of seven historical provinces: Alava, Biscay, Guipuzcoa and Navarre in Spain, and Labourd, Lower Navarre and Soule in France.³⁶

³³ Pål Trosvik, "The Basque mystery-roots of Biscayan language and culture," [University of Oslo \[Online\] http://folk.uio.no/paltr/basque_mystery.html](http://folk.uio.no/paltr/basque_mystery.html) 28 November, 2009.

³⁴ Minahan, 282.

³⁵ Ibid, 282.

³⁶ The Basque and Spanish names for Alava, Biscay, Guipuzcoa and Navarre are Araba/Álava, Bizkaia/Vizcaya, Gipuzkoa/Guipúcoa and Nafarroa/Navarre respectively. The Basque and French names for Labourd, Lower Navarre and Soule are Lapurdi (Basque only), Behe Nafarroa/Basse-Navarre and Zuberoa (Basque only).

For linguists and anthropologists alike, the Basque people are an anomaly. Basque or ‘Euskera’ is an isolate, meaning that it is wholly unconnected to any other language in the world.³⁷ Currently, there are between 300 000-500 000 individuals who speak Euskera. While this statistic may seem insignificant, the number “belie[s] the symbolic importance of the language” itself.³⁸ Historically, the Basque people have used their distinct language as a means of reinforcing their identity and sustaining their culture for centuries under Spanish monarchical rule, and clung fast to its memory through decades of fascist dictatorship. To this day, it remains one of the defining features of what it means to be ‘Basque’.

Spain, like many modern European nation-states, is a territorial fusion of regional areas, fashioned through acquisitions of wars, royal marriages and political allegiances. The persistence of regional distinctiveness has marked Spain as a divided nation since its creation in the 15th century. The Spanish state has its earliest roots in 1469, with the marriage of Isabel Castile and Fernando of Aragón, effectively joining the two most powerful monarchies in the area.³⁹ Spain’s expansion ultimately encompassed entire historically, culturally and linguistically different ‘nations’, of which the Basque Country was but one of many. With the historical precedence of being a distinctive nation and the lack of central unity within the Spanish state, the Basque people enjoyed relative autonomy with the existence of ‘fueros’ until the 1870s. Fueros can be defined as specific rights and privileges that allowed for a degree of political and economic independence within the Basque region. However, while the Basque fueros had been challenged before, it was not until the late 19th century, with the emergence of the modern concept of nationalism, that these traditional privileges were finally abolished. The slogan “each nation, a state, each state a national character” crystallises the vision of the nation-state in 19th century Europe,

³⁷ Whitney Blake Dennis, “Euskera as a Defining Feature of Euskadi,” MA Dissertation, Louisiana State University of Agricultural and Mechanical College, (May 2008), [Online] [http://etd.lsu.edu/docs/available/etd-04082008-144807/unrestricted/\(dennis\)thesis.pdf](http://etd.lsu.edu/docs/available/etd-04082008-144807/unrestricted/(dennis)thesis.pdf) (accessed 7 May, 2009).

³⁸ Jesus del Rio Luelmo and Allan Williams, “Regionalism in Iberia,” in *Regionalism in the European Union*, edited by Peter Wagstaff (Portland: Intellect Books, 1999), 172.

³⁹ Ludger Mees, “Politics, Economy, or Culture! The Rise and Development of Basque Nationalism in the Light of Social Movement Theory,” *Theory and Society* 33, No. 3/4 Special Issue: Current Routes to the Study of Contentious Politics and Social Change (June-August 2004), 317.

of which Spain wanted to partake.⁴⁰ Following this idea, a united Spain required centralised power, which was not possible with the presence of strong regional identities.⁴¹

The abolition of the Basque *fueros* became part of a dynastic dispute between King Fernando VII's daughter, Queen Isabel and her uncle, Carlos María Isidra. Those in support of Isabel demanded liberalisation to shape a more modern Spanish state. Carlos however, preferred a return to the old regime, which included the preservation of the Basque *fueros*.⁴² Seeing the abolition of their ancient rights akin to the destruction of their regional autonomy, identity and culture, the Basque people viewed the support of Carlos María Isidra, or "Carlism" as a way to defend against the encroachment of the Spanish state. The fact that many Basques did fight as Carlist supporters was not in order to "put the brother of the last absolutist king on the Spanish throne", but because it represented a claim for historic rights, an "effort to recover the 'lost independence'" of the Basque people.⁴³ Despite the support of the Basque people during the subsequent three wars (1833-1839/40, 1846-1849 and 1872-1876), the Carlists were ultimately defeated, and the *fueros* abolished. This gave rise to a mass appeal for their restoration, aptly called "fuerismo". Historians mark the widespread support of fuerismo as the catalyst for the shaping of a distinctly Basque national consciousness.⁴⁴ Fuerismo inspired a political and cultural Basque renaissance in which "local history was investigated and invented, national myths created, the decay of the Basque language deplored and the "Golden Age" of Basque freedom granted by the *Fueros* praised."⁴⁵ Through fuerismo, cultural romanticism took hold of the Basque Country, and inspired the first seeds of nationalist sentiment across the region.

Building upon this emergent nationalism, it is no accident that Sabino Arana Goiri founded the Basque National Party (Partido Nacionalista Vasca or PNV) in 1895. Arana,

⁴⁰ Ulrich Schenckener and Dieter Senghaas, "In Quest of Peaceful Coexistence- Strategies in Regulating Ethnic Conflicts," in *Radical Ethnic Movements in Contemporary Europe*, edited by Farimah Daftary and Stefan Troebst, (Canada: Bergahn Books, 2003), 165.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 165.

⁴² Javier Díaz Noci, "The Creation of the Basque Identity through Cultural Symbols in Modern Times," Seminar on Southern Europe, St. Anthony's College, European Studies Centre, University of Oxford, 15th February 1999, [Online] <http://www.ehu.es/diaz-noci/Conf/C17.pdf> (accessed 12 November, 2009), 11.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 11.

⁴⁴ Mees, 318.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 318.

considered by many to be the father of Basque nationalism, combined Carlist ideals and enthusiasm for fuerismo with the belief in Basque distinctiveness in order to call for the complete independence of the Basque Country. Using the political and economic climate to his advantage, Arana and the PNV gained supporters from those who were disenchanted by the consequences of rapid industrialisation to the Basque Country. Indeed by the end of the 19th century, the Basque Country was the site of extensive industrial growth due to the manufacture and export of iron ore deposits in the area.⁴⁶ While industrialisation was good for the economy of the region, such change was responsible for widespread discontent throughout the Basque Country. It can be argued that rapid industrialisation was responsible for the broad appeal of Arana's PNV in two ways. Firstly, the presence of the iron industry attracted a large influx of ethnically non-Basque labour to the area. The rise in 'foreign' Spanish workers to the Basque Country created an ethnically heterogeneous working class in the area. This caused panic and often violent conflicts.⁴⁷ Secondly, while the Basque Country was rich in terms of its industrial worth, it was experiencing a rapid increase in iron exports; ostensibly, a loss in the material wealth of the region. Arana and the PNV argued that the fuero system would not have allowed this to occur.⁴⁸ For them, the natural extension of a true fuero system was complete independence from Spain, in a country populated by true, ethnic Basques.

In defining Basque nationalism, Sabino Arana used the concept of particularism, of which there was already a considerable foundation, in order to "establish a boundary around the entity to be defined, that is, a distinction between insiders and outsiders."⁴⁹ While the Catholic religion was important to his definition, the most prominent feature of Arana's version of Basque identity was ethnic purity. It must be said that blood as belonging was not a revolutionary concept at this time. Indeed, it was also the foundation for nationalist sentiment throughout Europe, notably in Germany. With (perceived?) differences in blood, history, and culture, Basque nationalism and autonomy seemed a

⁴⁶ Mees, 319.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 320.

⁴⁸ Ilka Nordberg, "Regionalism and Revenue-The Moderate Basque Nationalist Party, The PNV, and Politico-Economic Power in the Basque Country of Spain 1980-1998, Ph.D Thesis University of Helsinki, 2005, 166.

⁴⁹ Daniele Conversi, "Can Nationalism Studies and Ethnic/Racial Studies be Brought Together?" Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies 30, No. 4 (2004), 816.

natural expression of Basque particularism. These ideas were bolstered by “the singularity of Euskera [which] encouraged the belief that the Basques were a race apart.”⁵⁰ The feeling of Basque uniqueness became a necessity of this burgeoning nation.⁵¹ Despite the goal of complete independence for the Basque Country presented in the Basque Autonomy Statute (1933), as well as significant political support in provinces including Vizcaya, the Basque independence movement was brought to a halt under the rule of Francisco Franco following the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939.⁵²

Under Franco’s totalitarian regime, lasting nearly four decades, Basque independence, culture and language were systematically suppressed. Franco was a fervent believer in Spanish nationalism therefore the presence of minorities could not exist within his ideological framework. Francisco Franco’s government enacted numerous policies in order to eradicate these linguistic and cultural anomalies, thereby forcing integration.⁵³ These policies included the banning of all minority languages from public space. Thus, no public documents could be issued in Basque, nor was there any media communication in the language. Most importantly, Basque was banned from all spheres of public life, including education. Violators of these laws were severely punished.⁵⁴ Over time, this led to a drastic decline in the number of Basque speakers in Euskal Herria, as “many parents prohibited their children from speaking Basque outside the home, or even stopped them using the language” entirely.⁵⁵

During Francisco Franco’s rule, individuals grew increasingly frustrated with the marginalisation of the Basque culture. Eventually, this fuelled the creation of ETA in 1959; a group dedicated to complete Basque independence.⁵⁶ ETA fused Sabino Arana’s nationalist ideology with their frustrations under Francoist rule. Whereas Arana’s nationalism was based on religion and ethnicity, for ETA the preservation of Basque

⁵⁰ Luelmo, 172.

⁵¹ Noci, 16.

⁵² Nordberg, 77.

⁵³ Dennis, 7.

⁵⁴ J. Mansvelt-Beck, *Territory and Terror: Conflicting Nationalisms in the Basque Country*, (London: Routledge, 2005), 60.

⁵⁵ Mansvelt-Beck, 60.

⁵⁶ J. P Linstroth, “The Basque Conflict Globally Speaking: Material Culture, Media and Basque Identity in the Wider World,” *Oxford Development Studies* 30, no. 2 (2002): 207.

language and culture were key in the formation of an independent state.⁵⁷ While ETA could initially be described as a more mainstream nationalist group, after 1968 it has become a paramilitary movement, which has embraced an increasingly violent approach to Basque autonomy.⁵⁸ Since the first round of attacks in 1968, ETA has been responsible for over 800 deaths.⁵⁹ Violence as a means to an end has caused a permanent split among supporters of Basque nationalism. There are the overwhelming majority who favour peaceful, democratic methods to advance the Basque cause, and a small minority who pursue or at least sympathise with more violent means of self-determination. While more than four decades has past, “ETA and ethnic violence still continue to condition politics in the Basque Country”.⁶⁰

With the death of Franco in 1975 and the creation of the 1978 constitution, the Basque people were free to be Basque once more.⁶¹ Organisations which had previously been banned, including the PNV, returned to public eye. During the general elections of 1979, there were several new Basque parties which came to the fore including the radical Herri Batasuna (now called Euskal Herritarrok). While the Francoist regime proposed to eradicate regional diversity, it ultimately “failed to expunge the desire for it”.⁶² Although his death allowed for demands for the recognition of cultural differences, his demise also brought to light the extent to which his policies had affected the Basque nation. After four decades of suppression, only 20% of the Basque people spoke their own language.⁶³ It was apparent that a revival of the Euskera language was necessary in order to restore the identity and culture of the Basque people.

⁵⁷ Dennis, 9.

⁵⁸ Nordberg, 80.

⁵⁹ Noci, 1.

⁶⁰ Mees, 325.

⁶¹ Linda White, “Orality and Basque Nationalism: Dancing with the Devil or Waltzing into the Future?,” *Oral Tradition* 16, no. 1 (2001): 4.

⁶² Peter Wagstaff, “Introduction: Regions, Nations, Identities,” in *Regionalism in the European Union*, edited by Peter Wagstaff (Portland; Intellect Books, 1999), 15.

⁶³ Minahan, 287.

Chapter 2.1- Preservation of Language in the Basque Country

Ez dok Hamairu

Bolstered by political action, activism and folk movements throughout the world, it is no coincidence that the 1960s provided the ideal milieu for a Basque musical renaissance. However, realizing that self-determination could “not be realized without...[an] emphasis on the Basque language”⁶⁴, many nationalists began grass-root campaigns to revitalise Euskera; of which music was but one medium. The appeal of music as an instrument of Basque cultural revival lies in its ability to communicate the importance of maintaining the language while at the same time being an outlet for its preservation. The “Ez dok Hamairu” (There’s No Thirteen) group was the first example of music being used as an instrument of the Basque musical renaissance. Created in 1965, “Ez dok Hamairu” was a collection of Basque artists, including Benito Lertxundi, Mikel Laboa and Xabier Lete, intent on preserving identity and language through artistic means. Artists involved in the movement updated traditional approaches to Basque culture, complementing it with their own social and political commentary.⁶⁵

The music of “Ez dok Hamairu” was poignant and relevant to the emerging Basque political consciousness of the 1960s and 1970s. The connection between a people and their language is arguably the most common theme of “Ez dok Hamairu”. Many of the songs are representative of the belief that language itself is core to Basque identity. The fragile status of Euskera therefore, is used to rally support for its normalisation within the Basque Country. In the song “Euskaldun berriaren Mazurka” for example, the lyrics call for “new Basque persons” to take up the challenge by rising as “soldier[s] of our language” and taking it “from the mountains and the seas to the cities.”⁶⁶ These lyrics imply that the defense and proliferation of the Basque language is the duty of every Basque person concerned with the preservation of their own cultural heritage. What is worthy of note is

⁶⁴ Dennis, 1.

⁶⁵ Cameron Watson, *Modern Basque History: Eighteenth Century to the Present*, (Reno: Centre for Basque Studies, 2003), 425

⁶⁶ Xalbardin/Herrikoia, “Euskaldunberriaren Mazurka,” 1987. [Online] [Burber’s Basque Page](http://buber.net/Basque/Music/Song/song12.html) <http://buber.net/Basque/Music/Song/song12.html> (accessed 2 December, 2009).

that the author makes a distinction using the term ‘new’ as applied to Basque people. This is particularly interesting as it demonstrates a sharp contrast between the Basque nationalist sentiment as characterised by Sabino Arana, where Basqueness was based primarily on blood and the current sentiment where being Basque is a conscious choice, and not necessarily an automatic consequence of ethnic origin. The idea that a Basque person is developed by his or her willingness to take up the cause is indeed, recurring in 20th and 21st century Basque nationalist literature. The importance of Euskera to the survival of Basque culture features repeatedly in the work of Benito Lertxundi, one of the founders of “Ez dok Hamairu”. Lertxundi wrote a song for the international Basque Language Day (December 3rd), which functions as an anthem to the centrality of language to the Basque cause. In the song, Lertxundi calls language a “faithful mirror”, which reflects the history, identity and future of its people. He argues that a nation that “breaks away from its language is a people that destroys its tradition and freezes its soul.”⁶⁷ With these lyrics Lertxundi connects the loss of the Basque language with the death of what it means to be Basque.

The songs and poems of “Ez dok Hamairu” succeeding in bringing Euskera back into the public eye, within the Basque Country and throughout the world. In this sense, “Ez dok Hamairu” laid the groundwork for the Basque Radical Rock movement, which began in the late 1970s, and continues in various forms to the present day.⁶⁸

Basque Radical Rock Movement

While the adoption of the Basque language into the popular music scene is important, it was not a straightforward process. The Franco regime had left many with insufficient “knowledge of the language to speak and sing in it.”⁶⁹ In spite of this, numerous bands took up singing in Euskera anyway, often learning through night and adult education classes. The late 1970s and 1980s marked a movement in the Basque language music scene which has been dubbed as “Basque Radical Rock”. Basque Radical Rock was

⁶⁷ Benito Lertxundi, “Anthem for International Basque Language Day,” *Benito Lertxundi-Oriolik Internetera* [Online] http://www.euskalnet.net/turibeechevarria/html/en_berr.htm (accessed 2 December, 2009).

⁶⁸ Michael Eade, “Mikel Laboa: Basque singer central to his culture’s revival,” *The Guardian* 9 December 2008 [Online] <http://www.guardian.co.uk/music/2008/dec/09/mikel-laboa-obituary> (accessed 20 December, 2009).

⁶⁹ Lahusen, 273.

so named because of its generally political tone and commitment to performing in the Basque language. It melded together the Basque language and nationalist sentiment with fast-paced, hard rock music. One of the most successful groups associated with the movement is Hertzainak, their name derived from the Euskera word for the Basque Autonomous Police. Their lead singer Gama, learned Euskera specifically to sing punk music. The band felt that “in Euskadi if it was to be punk music, it had to be in Euskera.”⁷⁰ Indeed, Hertzainak plays all of their emotionally charged songs in Basque, arguably because a message for the Basque people is stronger in Euskera. Another band, Zarama argue that “rock, and I believe I could prove this scientifically, hits and fits better in Euskera than in Spanish...it fits damn well.”⁷¹ The most influential group of the Basque Radical Rock movement, Negu Gorriak (Harsh Winters) is especially illustrative of the preservation of Euskera through music. Negu Gorriak’s choice to sing in Basque was extremely influential as it paved the way for others to do the same. Like Gama, Negu Gorriak, had to learn to speak the language through adult education classes.⁷² The band’s popularity brought the Basque language to the forefront of the Radical Rock scene, allowing for the identification of the new Basque identity with language over ethnicity, and the use of Basque as a language of protest.⁷³

In the field work conducted for this study, the need to sing in Basque in order to preserve the language itself was often listed as an important issue to the bands surveyed. Seiurte, a group hailing from the Basque country, argues that singing in Basque was not a choice, but a natural selection. They explain that when they started playing music at only 16 years old there was no real discussion on which language to perform in, as “Basque was our language and it was a minority language, so we had two reasons to sing in it.”⁷⁴ What is particularly interesting about this response is that Seiurte reflects the unaffectedness of choosing to sing in the Basque language. This shows a marked difference between those

⁷⁰ Ibid, 275.

⁷¹ Ibid, 274.

⁷² Jacqueline Urla, “We are Malcolm X: Negu Gorriak, Hip-Hop, and the Basque Political Imaginary” in *Global Noise: Rap and Hip Hop Outside the USA*, ed. Tony Mitchell, (Wesleyan: Wesleyan University Press, 2001): 175.

⁷³ Urla, 173.

⁷⁴ Genevieve Wickenden, “Minority Language Music Survey,” Seiurte Respondent.

groups which were part of the initial breakthrough in Basque language music beginning in the 1960s, and bands that are part of the musical scene now. Their predecessors generally lacked the knowledge of the language, but chose to learn Euskera in order to sing in it. This is contrasted by current Basque language bands, many of whom already have a knowledge of the language or are completely fluent. This reflects a general trend of normalisation of the Basque language through the success of Basque language schools or Basque immersion programmes. What remains constant however is that both use their music as a method of preserving the Basque language for future generations. This difference is indicative of how far the Basque language music scene has come since the 1960s- 1970s to the present day.

Chapter 2.2- Promotion of ‘Basqueness’: Music as a Global Platform

The popularisation of Basque Radical Rock throughout Spain and the world provided an ideal platform for the promotion of the Basque cause. Many artists within the movement were eager to create bonds with other marginalised groups. This is exhibited by their adoption of specific genres, including rap, ska and hip-hop, music traditionally associated with other minorities.⁷⁵ Through their music, Basque language bands like Negu Gorriak, Herzainak and Zarama allowed for a broader identification and dialogue with other “social movements within and beyond the Basque territory.”⁷⁶ This is shown by the purposeful connections between Basque music and other minority struggles, including the Irish and Welsh, but also with revolutionary movements in South America, Europe and Africa. On the cover of Negu Gorriak’s album *Gora Herria/Viva el Pueblo* (Long Live the People) a reference is made of the Cuban Revolution. This open alliance through both music and art illustrates the “affinity with international revolutionary struggles”.⁷⁷ In Negu Gorriak’s song “Napartheid” (1993), the group shows their identification with the South African policy of racial exclusion. The song calls for breaking “the chains imposed by the white man”, as he has “invaded our earth.” In this, Negu Gorriak is encouraging South Africans to rise against racism and exclusionary politics, but it is also encouraging the

⁷⁵ Urla, 178.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 178.

⁷⁷ Lahusen, 270.

Basque people to do the same.⁷⁸ Additionally, their song “We are all Malcolm X” shows Negu Gorriak’s commitment to deploy the Basque struggle through minority language music into “a broader dialogue with other social movements”⁷⁹

Using music as a way in which to connect with other marginalized groups is also illustrated in the lyrics of “The New Gangsters” by Hertzainak: *“in Belfast and so many other places on the endless list/Come all of you who support/your brothers in the struggle/You can get used to war/because war, there is/Just as the fish needs water so the people need you/As long as our pledge lasts/the fear will not take hold of us”*⁸⁰ In the song, the band shows its support of other minorities. The lyrics imply that an international pledge from like-minded individuals is the only way in which there can be any success. Basque Radical Rock thrives on the ability to raise awareness of the plight of Euskal Herria, but also in recognition of other disenfranchised minorities throughout the world. However, it is not only the band members themselves that consciously create links with other minority groups, their audience are also mindful of these connections. In a recent Basque Radical Rock concert which took place in Bilbao, Spain, the author herself met several individuals wearing shirts or otherwise expressing their solidarity for minority groups outside the Basque Country, including the Irish. This illustrates music’s ability to act as a global platform, for the identification and support of other minority groups.

Moreover, Basque Radical Rock has found its place in the music scenes of numerous countries and continents. Berri Txarrak for example, is popular throughout the world, and is deeply connected with other politically minded rock bands, like “Raise Against” and “Strike Anywhere”. Their popularity is shown by their extensive touring throughout Europe, North and South America and even Asia. In 2008 for example, they opened for the 2008 Fuji Rock Festival, the most important musical venue in all Japan, to great acclaim.⁸¹ It must be understood that music as a platform for the promotion of the Basque cause is certainly not a new phenomenon. The music of “Ez dok Hamairu” also

⁷⁸ Urla, 180.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 178.

⁸⁰ Hertzainak, “The New Gangsters,” as quoted in Lahusen, 276.

⁸¹ “News: Berri Txarrak Band,” Berri Txarrak Official Website, [Online] 2005 <http://www.berritxarrak.net/?atala=berriak> (accessed 21 May, 2009).

held international appeal. This is illustrated in the international appeal of Mikel Laboa's song "Txoria Txori" (The Bird who was a Bird), which continues to be popular within the Basque Country and in the United States. The message of "Txoria Txori" is one of liberation, an anthem for the freedom of the Basque people: *"If I had cut his wings, he would have been mine. He would not have flown away. But, he would have been a bird no longer. And he was the bird that I loved."*⁸² The song's popularity outside the Basque Country, specifically in English-language countries, is due to the fact that Joan Baez, one of the most prolific artists of the 1960s folk period, covered "Txoria Txori" in its original language. The connection with Joan Baez, one of the key artists in American folk music illustrates the global interest in Basque culture and music.

The ability of Basque language music to extend itself beyond its 'natural' borders illustrates one of the key functions of minority language music: the need to gain international support and recognition for the promotion of Basque concerns. Many of the Basque survey respondents addressed the issue of music as a global platform. For example, Roni, a band from the French Basque Country states that most of their music is written in Basque "as mirror of [their] identity." In doing this, they argue that they "not only defend Basque culture, but... other minority languages" as well.⁸³ In response to questions on their (ideal) audience, Roni answered: "We'd like to meet others who are proud to defend their culture and to spread...[their] message. We have no plan for the future, but if we could go away to present our work, and music, it would be great." This shows music's unique ability to connect different cultures, creating a common ground for sharing the concerns of minority groups. This is also shown by the band Seiurte who maintain that while the goal of their music is to enjoy themselves, they insist that if "at the same time we can make Basque culture stronger and spread it, we are twice as happy."⁸⁴

In the field work, many bands also touched upon the importance of cultural diversity and the exchange of ideas in their music. One band argued that while they identify with the Basque minority, they are "open to the whole world." Through their music, an

⁸² Mikel Laboa, "Txoria Txori," [Online] Burber's Basque Page [Online] <http://buber.net/Basque/?p=26> (accessed 3 December, 2009).

⁸³ Genevieve Wickenden, "Minority Language Music Survey." Roni respondent.

⁸⁴ Genevieve Wickenden, "Minority Language Music Survey." Seiurte respondent.

inevitable part of a “constant cultural exchange’, they succeed in sharing their own ideas but dialogue with others from everywhere in the world.⁸⁵ Another group states that the message they are trying to convey in their music consists in “convincing public that music is not only English or French commercial songs you hear on the radio. It can be the expression of other cultures, sometimes very old, but able to...[exist] in modernity. Whatever your culture is, you have to respect the other ones. Humanity richness is located in her diversity.”⁸⁶

It is evident that music as a global platform is key to the Basque language music scene. Music offers artists the ability to express their own ideas, beliefs and concerns about the Basque situation outside traditional national boundaries. Moreover, music allows for the deliberate establishment between minority cultures, encouraging a respect for diversity and mutual concerns between marginalised peoples. It can be argued therefore, that Basque language music succeeds in spreading their message throughout the world, thereby fostering a bond of brotherhood and solidarity through music.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Genevieve Wickenden, “Minority Language Music Survey.” Roni respondent.

Chapter 2.3- Basque Radical Rock and the Abertzale Movement

Knowledge of the ‘abertzale’ movement is crucial to an understanding of the Basque Radical Rock music scene. Abertzale is a Basque patriot movement that emerged in the early 1980s when it was determined by more radical nationalists that the 1978 constitution did not provide enough autonomy for the Basque people.⁸⁷ It must be understood however, that the word ‘abertzale’ is imbued with a variety of meanings. Firstly, the word itself is used to denote any person defending Basque sovereignty. In this paper however, the term will be used specifically to designate the more radical patriot movement, though not exclusively the violent constituent. Those involved with the abertzale movement hoped to politicize their struggle further and actively encouraged an association with emerging artists in the Basque language music scene, including Negu Gorriak and Herzainak.⁸⁸ Indeed, the use of the term “Basque Radical Rock” (el Rock Radical Vasco) was a categorical strategy employed to politicise a group of previously unconnected Basque language musicians.⁸⁹ The abertzale movement infused Basque Radical Rock with their terminology, demands, ideas and grievances.⁹⁰ The connection between the abertzale movement and Basque language musicians was a mutually beneficial, symbiotic relationship. For those within the movement, the attachment to Basque punk-rock music was a way to “reinforce its connection with energetic youth and to radicalize rock-concert goers.”⁹¹ Conversely, the association with abertzale ideology provided Basque Radical Rock bands publicity, artistic venues and access to a wider audience.⁹² Basque Radical Rock became the musical culture of Basque nationalism. The “deliberate music[al] construction” between the abertzale and Basque Radical Rock was

⁸⁷ Lahusen, 264.

⁸⁸ Lahusen, 269.

⁸⁹ Jeremy MacClancy, Expressing Identities in the Basque Arena, (Cumbria: School for Advanced Research Press, 2007), 31.

⁹⁰ Lahusen, 275.

⁹¹ MacClancy, 31.

⁹² *Ibid*, 31.

“appropriated and incorporated within radical nationalist movements in an active way, an emotional tool to elicit support and patriotism.”⁹³

The politicisation of the Radical Rock music scene is illustrated by the legal battles fought by various Basque bands. For example, Negu Gorriak was brought to trial for their song “Ustelkeria (Rottenness). The track was banned, and they were fined 15 million pesetas for “defamation of character” of a member of the Spanish military.⁹⁴ Although they were later cleared of the charges, such occurrences are relatively common, as is the censorship of Basque musicians in Spain. In an interview held in 2007, the former front-man of Negu Gorriak, Fermin Muguruza describes why he is confronted by the authorities: they “are afraid of my music because it is a tool against the ignorance...these authorities want ignorance so that they can do what they want...they are afraid of my music because I can meet a lot of different people, and they can listen to different ways of thinking.”⁹⁵ Other examples of censorship include the cancellation of concerts of the Basque or Basque-related bands, including Su Ta Gar, Sociedad Alcoholico, Manu Chao, Berri Txarrak and Leihotikan.⁹⁶ Usually, reasons given for the cancellations revolve around the artists’ (supposed) connection or glorification of terrorism or terrorist groups like the ETA. This censorship illustrates two points. Firstly, the music of the Basque Radical Rock has come to the attention of all levels of society, at least within Spain. This shows increasing levels of visibility of the movement itself. Secondly, the recent censorship in Spain speaks to the attitude of the Basque people that wish to distance themselves from the violent terrorist acts of the ETA and other groups like it. This shows the willingness of the Basque people to seek non-violent methods of maintaining their identity and pursuing higher levels of autonomy.

⁹³ John Connell and Chris Gibson, Sound Tracks: Popular Music, Identity and Place, (New York: Routledge, 2003), 135.

⁹⁴ Urla, 178.

While Negu Gorriak was later cleared of all charges, they were extremely successful in creating a benefit concert to help them pay for their legal fees. This shows the importance of this band in the context of Basque nationalism.

⁹⁵ Interview with Fermin Muguruza, 29 March, 2007, Freemuse: Freedom of Musical Expression 4 April, 2007 [Online] <http://www.freemuse.org/sw22104.asp> 11 May, 2009

⁹⁶ “Censorship in Spain,” 28 January, 2004 Freemuse: Freedom of Musical Expression <http://www.freemuse.org/sw4643.asp> 11 May, 2009.

While the connection between nationalist politics is evident, the Basque language music scene is marked by other political associations, particularly related to leftist ideology, environmentalism, anti-imperialism and conscious affiliations with minority groups with separatist agendas. For example, Negu Gorriak has continually expressed their appreciation of Black culture through their incorporation of the hip-hop and rap genres into their music, and their affiliation with the Zapatista movement in Latin America.⁹⁷ The incorporation of politics into Basque language music is also shown in the field work conducted for this study. In the survey, the band Roni stated that while they want people to enjoy their music, it is also important to make them politically aware “of the situation the world is living now, locally and globally In the Basque language, there is an expression: “besta bai borroka ere bai” (“Yes to the party, yes to the struggle too”).”⁹⁸ The band Izaete affirmed the importance of politics within their music. They assert that “there are many messages that we wish to convey through our music: a political message for a just and egalitarian civilisation, an environmental message as well...[and] certainly, our protest (demands) in relation to the Basque Country.”⁹⁹ They state they are “militants in life” and choose to perform in the rock music genre as it lends itself too well to protest.¹⁰⁰ One Basque musician argued that while he alone is unable to create a free Basque Country, what he can do is “tell the people to raise their consciousness, to break the seat in which they are sitting and to move themselves...The unity of our movement is based on action in the street.”¹⁰¹

While many within the Basque language music scene are clearly political, this is not always the case. Many exhibit political tendencies within their music but are weary of declaring any open allegiance for fear of being used as political pawns. Their fear is not without ground, as many Basque language bands of the 1980s and 1990s were associated with the abertzale movement purely because they sang in Euskera. In the book *Expressing Identities in the Basque Arena*, Jeremy MacClancy addresses the fears of Basque language artists of being used as “mere puppets of experienced politicians.” He argues that many bands

⁹⁷ Urla, 179.

⁹⁸ Genevieve Wickenden, “Minority Language Music Survey.” Roni respondent.

⁹⁹ Genevieve Wickenden, “Minority Language Music Survey.” Izaete respondent. Translation is author’s own.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Quoted in MacClancy, 32.

are uncomfortable with any association for fear of being “cynically manipulated for political ends.”¹⁰² This experience is also echoed in the Catalan language music scene. For example, the Catalan language band, Els Pets is widely considered to be a pro-Catalan group despite only having four songs which address the issue of separatism.¹⁰³

Whether they openly align themselves with a particular ideology or vehemently refuse any such label, it is clear that the Basque language music scene is undeniably political. In this respect, the politicisation of music allows for the widespread acknowledgement of nationalist concerns both within and outside the borders of the Basque Country.

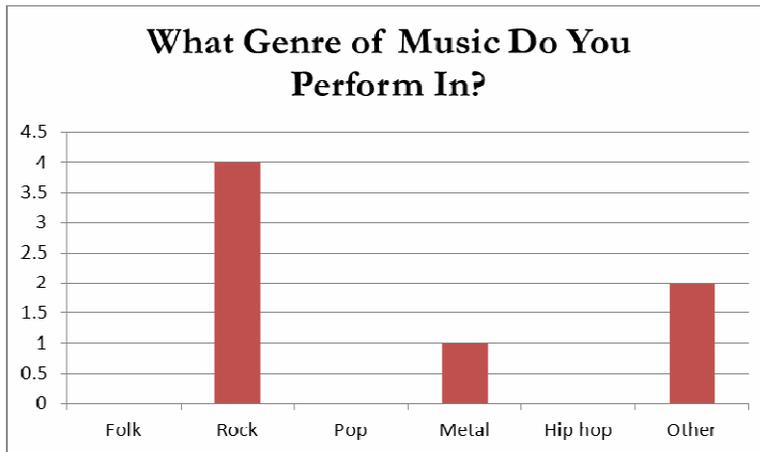
Chapter 2.4- Analysis of Survey Results

In the field work for this study, numerous bands were contacted via myspace.com and Basque music associations. Of those contacted, five language bands responded to the survey: Izate, Seiurte, Une, Bidaia and Roni. Four of the bands are from the Spanish side and one from the French part of the Basque Country. Generally, the field work reflected the general trends of contemporary Basque language music. The bands surveyed used their music in order to preserve Euskera, promote the culture and politicise the demands of their minority group. It is important to note that for many of the questions, respondents were able to choose multiple responses depending on the nature of the question. This was the case with questions related to musical genre, goal and message of the music, intended audience and identity. This would allow for a more accurate and holistic understanding of the Basque language music scene. The first question of the survey related to the genre of music that the bands performed in. The options were folk, rock, pop, metal, hip-hop and other.

¹⁰² Ibid, 32.

¹⁰³ Maria van Liew, “The Scent of Catalan Rock: Els Pets’ Ideology and the Rock and Roll Industry” *Popular Music* 12, No. 3 (October 1993), 253.

Chart 1- *Genre of Music, Basque Case*

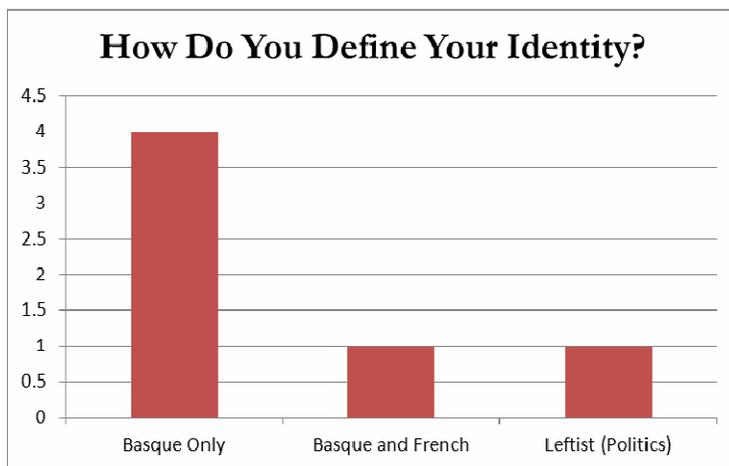


While contemporary Basque language music employs a fusion of musical styles, most bands are generally classified within the ‘rock’ genre. This was certainly the case as represented in the field work. The vast majority classified their music as ‘rock’. Negu Goriak is considered a rock band, but relies heavily on reggae and rap music as well. This was also shown in the survey results, as two respondents noted that they played reggae and rap music as part of the repertoire, despite being ‘rock’ bands. The survey results indicate that the Basque language music scene is still very much connected to its “Radical Rock” past. The second question of the survey related to the respondents’ concept of geographical identity. “What Country/Region Are You From?” may seem at first to be an innocuous, straight-forward query, but for minority cultures, especially ones that express separatist tendencies, it is an important one. Of the five bands surveyed, all of the respondents listed the Basque Country as their origin. In several cases, the Basque term for the region, Euskal Herria was even used. This shows a high level of nationalist attachment to their minority’s region. The only respondent to show any distinction in their response listed “Basque Country (French Part)” as their response. This shows that perhaps they identify as both Basque and French, and are content to do so.

The question of identity relates closely to one of the other inquiries which asked respondents to define their identity. This was asked in order to understand whether their concept of identity played a part in the music that they perform. Four of the respondents

listed their identity as solely Basque. The band Izate for example, stated that “We are Basques first, and this certainly shows in our music.”¹⁰⁴ Izate also responded that their political tendencies also play a part in their identity. Another respondent states that while “our identity is naturally Basque...[we are] open to the whole world.”¹⁰⁵ The band Roni states “everyone has a different identity: some members define themselves only as Basque, others as Basque and French at the same time, but we all agree in defending the Basque culture. Our identity is very important for us.”¹⁰⁶ One band expressed quite simply that “we are from Basque country (Euskal Herria) and we are very proud.”¹⁰⁷

Chart 3- How Would You Define Your Identity, Basque Case



As part of the phenomenon of contemporary Basque music scene, it is seems obvious that bands will sing in the minority language of Euskera. However, not only is it important to understand the reasons why bands feel it necessary to sing in Basque, but also what other languages they perform in. The field work of this study discovered that while all of the Basque bands surveyed performed in Euskera, only two sang in the official state languages of French and Spanish. This perhaps illustrates the bands’ dedication to the Basque language, culture and political needs. This is again illustrated in the responses to the question “If your band performs in a minority language, is there a particular reason why

¹⁰⁴ Genevieve Wickenden, “Minority Language Music Survey.” Izate respondent. Translation is author’s own.

¹⁰⁵ Genevieve Wickenden, “Minority Language Music Survey.” Seuirte respondent.

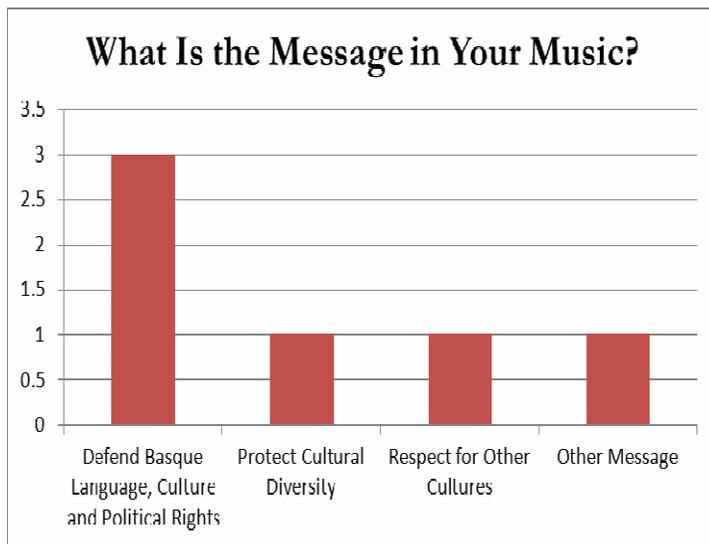
¹⁰⁶ Genevieve Wickenden, “Minority Language Music Survey.” Roni respondent.

¹⁰⁷ Genevieve Wickenden, “Minority Language Music Survey,” Une respondent.

you do?” In the field work, bands listed only two main reasons that they choose to sing in Basque. The first reason was to defend Basque culture and language, and the secondly because it seemed natural and/or because it is their mother tongue. The band Izate asserts that the Basque language is their mother tongue, and thus, “it is an integral part of our culture which we want to defend.”¹⁰⁸ A band member from Bidaia states that Basque is “my family’s language, I use it every day with some people and always with my daughter. I feel it...[is] like a testimony and respect for my ancestors.”¹⁰⁹ These responses underscore the continued importance of Euskera to contemporary Basque bands.

Further questions in the survey addressed issues of the intended message, goals and audience of Basque language music. Those Basque bands who responded to the survey indicated several main messages that they wished to convey through their music: defense of the Basque language, culture and/or political rights, the protection of diversity, respect for other cultures and other messages such as environmentalism. The results again underscore the importance of the preservation of Euskera, the preservation of culture and a political element present in the contemporary Basque language music scene.

Chart 5- *What is the Message in Your Music? Basque Case*

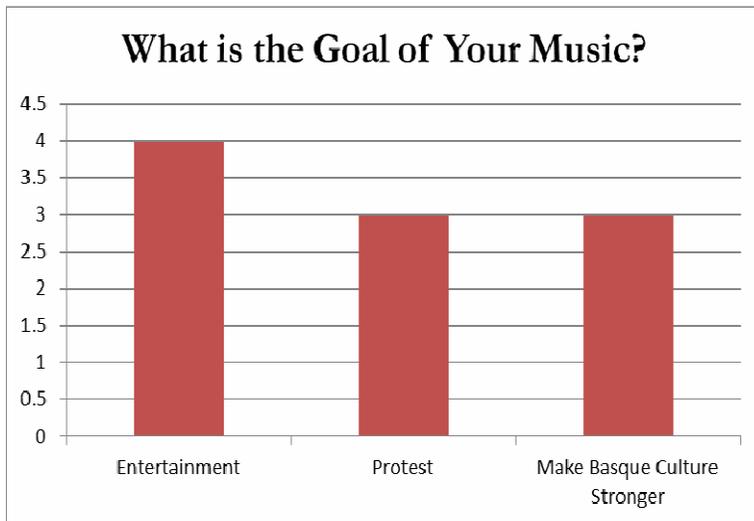


¹⁰⁸ Genevieve Wickenden, “Minority Language Music Survey,” Izate respondent. Translation is author’s own.

¹⁰⁹ Genevieve Wickenden, “Minority Language Music Survey,” Bidaia respondent.

These results are again paralleled in the question regarding the goal of Basque language music. The responses could be organised according to three main themes: for entertainment, to use music as a form of protest and to make Basque culture stronger by making it better known. Once more this echoes the purpose of Basque language music as a movement intended to promote, preserve and politicise this particular minority group.

Chart 6- *What is the Goal of Your Music? Basque Case*



In terms of intended audience, the bands’ responses were evenly divided. Those surveyed stated their desired audience was either other Basque people, while others favoured those interested in the Basques OR other cultures. It is important to mention that for those bands that listed that their intended audience is other Basques, they “are not closed” to others from different cultures. In fact, many argue that they wish any kind of audience, especially those curious about other cultural groups, as “language shouldn’t be a problem and we are fighting for that.”¹¹⁰ For those who argued that as they are Basque language bands, their natural audience is other Basque speakers, or at least those interested in the Basque or other (minority) cultures. One band argued that the Basque public is their priority as their songs are written in Basque. Evidently, those within the Basque language music scene are interested in reaching as large of an audience as possible, irrespective of cultural or political affiliations. This incorporates a political element as reaching other non-

¹¹⁰ Genevieve Wickenden, “Minority Language Music Survey,” Seiurte Respondent.

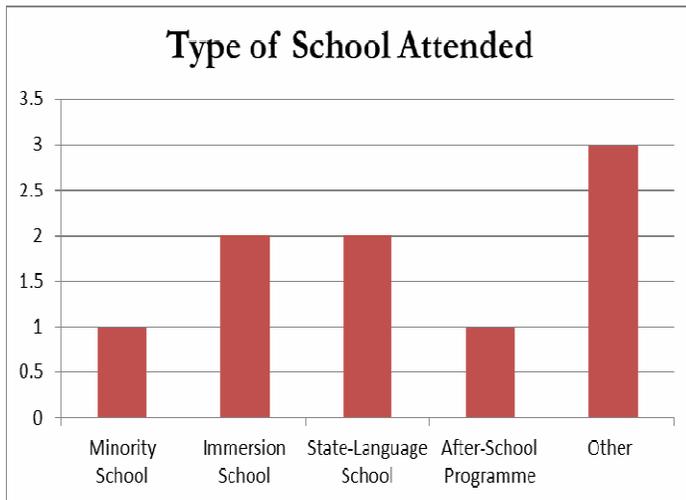
Basque people through their music may help in politicising specific issues, or at least encouraging outside interest in the Basque minority itself.

The final questions on the survey addressed socio-linguistic demographic questions related to language issues, such as frequency and place of language use, as well as type of school attended. Based on the results from the survey, it is evident that those involved within the Euskera music scene tend to be very active in the Basque minority. This can be illustrated by the fact that four respondents use their minority languages either ‘Very Often’, defined as 4-5 times per week, and one stated they used Basque ‘Sometimes’, (3-4 times a week). In the field work, the place of language use is also well distributed. Bands noted that they spoke Euskera at home, at school at work and with friends and family. One band member states that “I use it every day...it’s the language I communicate with to my family and my children.”¹¹¹ These responses are important as they show the increasing normalisation of the Basque language, and its increased acceptability in society.

One of the most interesting finds presented in the field work into Basque language music is the diversity of responses in terms of type of school attended. Most of the respondents had learned the Basque language through other means, primarily through self-education. This again underscores the importance that singing in Euskera has for the Basque music scene, as it is more effective in terms of preservation, promotion and politicisation of issues. What is equally interesting is that depending on the age of the respondent, usually the ones that went to State-Language Schools, learned Basque by themselves, while those that learned through after-school programmes are generally older. Conversely, those who attended minority-language and immersion schools, tend to be from the younger Basque generation.

¹¹¹ Genevieve Wickenden, “Minority Language Music Survey,” Izate respondent.

Chart 8- Type of School Attended, Basque Case



One individual from the band Bidaia states that he learned Euskera from his family as well through self-education, as Basque schools “didn’t exist in my young time.” However, he is quick to point out that his daughter is now enrolled in a Basque school.¹¹² This is reflected in the efforts to improve the status, visibility and number of speakers of Euskera with the introduction of the Normalization Law of the Basque Language. This law works by creating a legal framework in order to “empower the use of the Basque language and develop it for use in the institutional life of the Community beyond informal domains.”¹¹³ These laws, which have been effective since 1982, are encouraging the regular use of the Basque language, including through education. The success of this law is illustrated by the fact that 22.5% of the population of the Basque Country over the age of 15 are proficient in Basque, at least on an oral level. However, this figure is made more significant, when one understands that the competency in the Basque language is significantly higher in those individuals under the age of 15.¹¹⁴ It is this demographic that is benefiting the most from the Normalization Laws as, they are generally the participants in Basque-medium

¹¹² Genevieve Wickenden, “Minority Language Music Survey,” Bidaia Respondent.

¹¹³ Juan Cobarrubias, “History of the “Normalization” of Basque in the Public Administration Sphere, Basque Educational Organization [Online] <http://www.basqueed.org/ENE2008/ene135164.pdf> (accessed 26 December, 2009).

¹¹⁴ Jasone Aldekoa and Nicholas Gardner, “Turning Knowledge of Basque Into Use: Normalisation Plans for Schools,” Department of Education, Universities and Research [Online] <http://www.hezkuntza.ejgv.euskadi.net/r43-540/es/> (accessed 26 December, 2009).

education, immersion curriculums or other after-school programmes. Thus, it seems that due to recent trends in language policy, the Euskera will be increasingly better represented and more visible in the Basque Country.

Chapter 3- A Brief History of Friesland

Figure 2- Map of the Province of Friesland ¹¹⁵



With a population of 865,000 within Europe, and an additional 35,000 living in the United States and Canada, the Frisian minority is, by this definition, one of the largest in the Europe. ¹¹⁶ The minority itself is spread over three countries: Germany, in the province of Schleswig-Holstein, Denmark and in the Netherlands, primarily in the province of Friesland. Friesland is considered to be the heart of the Frisian minority, and will be the focus of this study. Frisian or ‘Frysk’ is a member of the West-Germanic language family, and is considered a bridge between English and Dutch. ¹¹⁷ In fact, Old English and Old Frisian were at one time mutually intelligible. ¹¹⁸ However, like many minority languages, Frisian is not linguistically homogenous, but is divided into several mutually unintelligible dialects: North Frisian (Germany and Denmark), Saterland Frisian (Germany) and West Frisian (The Netherlands). Moreover, there are several sub-dialects present in Friesland, most notably ‘City Frisian’, Clay Frisian, Wood Frisian and Southwestern Frisian.

¹¹⁵ “Lingual Map of Friesland,” *Language in the Netherlands* [Online] <http://taal.phileon.nl/kaart/friesland.php> (accessed 22 December, 2009).

¹¹⁶ James Minahan, *One Europe Many Nations: A Historical Dictionary of European National Groups*, 263.

¹¹⁷ James Minahan, *Encyclopedia of the Stateless Nations: Ethnic and National Groups Around the World, Volume 3*, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2002): 613.

¹¹⁸ Minahan, *One Europe Many Nations*, 263.

Friesland is the largest province in the Netherlands and is located in the Northeast of the country. It has a population of approximately 640,000 people, and is politically divided into thirty-one municipalities, with the provincial and administrative capital located in the city of Leeuwarden (Ljouwert). Approximately 411,000 people speak the Frisian language in Netherlands, however it is estimated that many more have at least some understanding of the language.¹¹⁹ Friesland is a visually stunning, primarily rural area, which is demonstrated by the fact that half of their population reside in communities of less than 5,000 people.¹²⁰ What distinguishes Friesland from the rest of the Netherlands, however, is not its landscape but its distinctive language, which has survived despite historical and political incursions since the late 1400s. It can be argued that Frisian identity, preserved over the centuries, is based on a history of cultural distinctiveness, and grounded in linguistic difference.

Figure 3- Frisian Language Areas¹²¹



The original Frisian people settled the region surrounding the North Sea, stretching as far as modern-day Denmark to Bruges, Belgium. The Frisians have always been an independent-minded people. Early historical records show that despite being conquered by various groups and tribes, the Frisian people maintained their own measure of autonomy,

¹¹⁹ Minahan, *One Europe Many Nations*, 263.

¹²⁰ Janet Mary Penrose, "The Role of Ethnic Political Activism in the Preservation of Frisian Ethnicity in the Netherlands," (PhD Dissertation, University of Toronto, 1989), i.

¹²¹ "Frisian Language Areas," *Lowlands-L*, [Online] <http://www.lowlands-l.net/anniversary/frysk-info.php> (accessed 5 December, 2009).

even if it was embodied only in their wilful defiance of the laws of their conquerors.¹²² The permanent loss of independence came in 1498, when Friesland came under the control of Duke Albert of Saxony-Meissen who was granted the land by Emperor Maximilian I. However, the land reverted back to the Emperor in 1515 when the Duke's son, "unable to control the wild Frisians, finally sold the Frisian homeland back".¹²³ Since then, Friesland has always been integrated into a larger unit, but was never fully assimilated. Although Frisian independence was never fully regained after 1498, "their desire to do so was a prominent theme in much of their subsequent history".¹²⁴ The Union of Utrecht in 1580 granted Friesland provincial sovereignty, allowing for some freedom in terms of self-governance over their social and political concerns, including religion.¹²⁵ Their decision to join the Union of Utrecht reflects once more their desire for autonomy.¹²⁶ By 1648, the province of Friesland finally joined the United Republic of the Netherlands; finalising its position within the Dutch state.

While 1498 marked the beginning of Friesland's political domination by outside powers, it also prompted the systematic linguistic loss of the Frisian language. Prior to this, Frisian was used extensively as both a written and spoken language. However, after the 15th century, written Frisian decreased dramatically, as the language of administration, culture and politics became the language of the conqueror, Dutch.¹²⁷ The domination of Dutch in all spheres of society, save for within rural communities, was accelerated due to the linguistic similarities of the two languages. The decay of Frisian occurred at a much faster rate than the Basque and Welsh minorities, as they belong to separate linguistic families than Spanish and English respectively. Moreover, while the survival of minority languages has in many cases been supported by the Church, Frisian was linguistically too similar to its Dutch counterpart to warrant the translation of any major religious doctrine.¹²⁸ Apart from

¹²² Minahan, *Encyclopedia of Stateless Nations*, 614.

¹²³ *Ibid*, 614.

¹²⁴ Penrose, 11.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, 116-117.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, 116.

¹²⁷ Anthonia Feitsma, "The reformation and the vernacular," *Fourth International Conference on Minority Languages Volume II: Western and Eastern European Papers* edited by Durk Gorter, Jarich F. Hoekstra, Lammert G. Jansma and Jehannes Ytsma, (Bristol: Multilingual Matters Ltd, 1990), 4.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, 3.

some religious material used primarily for home worship, there was almost a “complete neglect of the Frisian language in the religious domain.”¹²⁹ This fact is only fully appreciated when one realises that the first translation of the Bible into Frisian was completed only in 1943.¹³⁰

Lacking the linguistic support of the Church, and being effectively abandoned within the administrative and political sphere of society, it is a wonder how the Frisian language managed to survive at all. Indeed, for five centuries, the Frisian language and culture was dominated by its Dutch counterpart. However, the perseverance of Frisian language and thus, the survival of its culture is due to several factors. Firstly, Friesland was demonstrably isolated in terms of geography from the rest of the Netherlands up until 1932 with the building of a dike to connect the Frisian peninsula to the Dutch mainland.¹³¹ Thus, while the Frisian language was being eroded by Dutch, it was not absorbed completely, and continued to thrive in more isolated locations. Moreover, the Frisian minority is relatively concentrated into an identifiable area. Indeed, geographic concentration gives minority groups strength to resist acculturation as it is harder to assimilate them into the prevailing culture. Secondly, Friesland’s history of sovereignty, and its relatively recent inclusion into the Dutch fold, provided an anchor for the maintenance of Frisian identity and a platform for the language itself. Added to this was the work of the poet Gysbert Jpicx whose work gave a literary backing to the subsequent Frisian revival.¹³²

As is the pattern with most minority languages in Europe, it was the banning of the language in the educational sphere that had a detrimental effect on the language itself. This resulted in the further encroachment of the Dutch language in all spheres of Frisian society, to the point that it truly became an endangered language.¹³³ The realisation that the language was slowly disappearing was a turning point for Friesland. As Joshua Fishman observed, “home is where the tongue is”. Thus, the death of the language would mean the

¹²⁹ Feitsma, 4.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, 6.

¹³¹ Minahan, *Encyclopedia of Stateless Nations*, 615.

¹³² Feitsma, 6.

¹³³ Minahan, *One Europe Many Nations*, 266

ostensible loss of Frisian identity and cultural distinctiveness.¹³⁴ This saw the revival of romantic ideals of the 19th century that resulted in the formation of various organisations dedicated to Frisian culture and identity, such as the Frisian Society for History and Culture (1827) and Society for Frisian Linguistics and Literature (1844), dedicated to “halting the loss of [the] language and calling for its official recognition.”¹³⁵ Romanticism also inspired the emergence of new Frisian writers including Obe Postma and the Halbertsma brothers. Their work “stimulated the Frisian population to read and sing in their own language”.¹³⁶ The 20th century marked the development of the Frisian revival as it merged the romanticism of 19th century nationalist sentiment, with the desire to accomplish real, measurable change for the minority itself. Consequently, in the early years of the 20th century, a revival of interest in the Frisian culture led to efforts towards protecting and improving the status of the Frisian language and its naturalisation within society. Moreover, the revitalisation efforts were not concentrated on Frisian language alone. “Rather than simply preserving language in isolation, the Frisian movement now focused on the preservation of the Frisian way of life.”¹³⁷ The Frisian revival centered on the popular slogan “Frysk en Frij” (Frisian and Free), which demonstrated the intent to use the Frisian language “in all arenas of public and private life.”¹³⁸

However, it was not until the 20th century that the ideas supported by these organisations really came to fruition.¹³⁹ With the development of other like-minded associations, such as the Young Frisian Fellowship (1915), Frisian National Party, General Frisian Education Committee (1927) and the Frisian Academy (1938), they succeeded in reversing the erosion of Frisian language and culture. While West Frisian is still a ‘threatened’ language, it is by no means in danger of extinction. Due to recent progress in the educational, administrative, media and political spheres, Frisian is faring well for a

¹³⁴ Joshua Fishman, “The New Linguistic World Order,” *Foreign Policy*, No. 1 (1999), 29.

¹³⁵ Helma Ekerlens, “Language of the Heart- About the Frisian Language and Culture,” First Edition, *Province of Fryslân* (2004) [Online] <http://www.afuk.nl/kontenttaalstipe/taalfanithertingelsk.pdf> (accessed 9 November, 2009), 12.

¹³⁶ Ekerlens, 13.

¹³⁷ Penrose, 157.

¹³⁸ Bruce Williams, “Frysky Business: Micro-Regionalism in the Era of Post-Nationalism,” 14, no. 1 *Film/Music* (2002), 106.

¹³⁹ Ekerlens, 13.

minority group. It is now recognised as one of the two official languages of the Netherlands, and is accorded status and support by the Dutch state. The success of the Frisian revival is illustrated by the results of a recent poll, in which 54% declared Frisian as its mother tongue, and 73% claimed they were able to speak the language.¹⁴⁰ This shows that while the Frisian language may never achieve parity with Dutch, it will not disappear.

Chapter 3.1- Preservation of Language in Friesland

By many accounts, the Frisians are one of the best protected and represented minority groups in Europe. In the Netherlands, they are the only linguistic minority to be recognised or supported. Frisian has also been established as the second official language of the State. However, while there have been drastic improvements to the minority situation in Friesland, it is far from perfect. Indeed, while the numbers of Frisian speakers is at a relatively high level, considering the language's minority status, there leaves much to be desired. For example, while Frisian is in no real danger of extinction, the perception of the language itself is of great concern. Outside Friesland, the language has a relatively low level of prestige.¹⁴¹ Frisian and other languages/dialects present in the Netherlands, such as Limburg for example, are viewed by others as strange, archaic and even laughable.¹⁴² Moreover, while they are in the demographic majority within Friesland itself, it is the Dutch-speakers whose are in the position to have their "language interests and desires being realized and thus exert...more power."¹⁴³

The status of a minority language can have a great effect on the number of individuals, especially youths, who speak it. Thus, if a language is demonised or not seen as valuable, the chances of it being kept generation after generation, declines drastically. Fortunately for the Frisian minority, the predominant (internal) attitude towards the language is overwhelmingly positive. Many speakers feel emotionally attached to Frisian,

¹⁴⁰ Fishman, *Reversing the Language Shift*, 154.

¹⁴¹ Durk Gorter, Alex Riemersma and Jehannes Ytsma, "Frisian in the Netherlands," in *The Other Languages of Europe: Demographic, Sociolinguistic and Educational Perspectives*, edited by Guus Extra and Durk Gorter, (North York: Multilingual Matters Inc, 2001), 110.

¹⁴² One individual in the author's acquaintance had to purposely adopt the more 'standard' Dutch dialect while going to university outside of her home province of Limburg, as her regional accent was constantly ridiculed. Sadly, her case is not unusual.

¹⁴³ *Ibid*, 110.

and describe it in terms of its ‘beauty’ and ‘value’.¹⁴⁴ During the field work for this study, these sentiments were echoed often in the responses. In addition to describing Frisian as a beautiful language, one respondent stated that “Frisian is a great singing language (e.g. Dutch isn’t) because of its many open vowels. It flows, so to say, and it’s poetic.”¹⁴⁵ Another respondent also remarked on the lyrical nature of Frisian, calling it a “poetry language with beautiful expressions and words.”¹⁴⁶

In a recent work on the Frisian language, researchers identified four main categories or approaches held by Frieslanders to their minority tongue. Firstly, there are those who have negative emotions towards Frisian. They believe that the Frisian language should only be used amongst speakers, and are against using it for official purposes.¹⁴⁷ The second group of people may express an attachment to the language, but argue that Frisian is “useless for economic purposes or any ‘serious’ use.”¹⁴⁸ Individuals in the third category include those who feel no connection to Frisian, but believe that the policy problems connected to language issues can be solved in a rational way. Thus, while these respondents feel no emotional connection themselves, they may harbour some ideas on the benefits or at least understand why the language needs to be preserved.¹⁴⁹ Lastly, the authors outlined a final group which were positive both in their attachment to the language and opinions about Frisian.¹⁵⁰

The varied approaches and concerns for the Frisian language may be used to explain why there is no real established connection using minority language music as a channel for linguistic preservation. This is in direct contrast with the Basque and the Welsh minorities, who are more explicit in the use of music for this exact purpose. In fact, in the field work for this study, only a handful of Frisian respondents even address the issue of music as a method of linguistic preservation. When asked “Why do you choose to sing in a minority language?” the band Ljoubjr and DeRoels gave three reasons: “First of all it is a beautiful

¹⁴⁴ Gorter, 110.

¹⁴⁵ Genevieve Wickenden, “Minority Language Music Survey,” Nynke Laverman Respondent.

¹⁴⁶ Genevieve Wickenden, “Minority Language Music Survey,” RemoliNo Respondent.

¹⁴⁷ Gorter, 109.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 109.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, 109.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 109.

language. Second to keep the language alive and third it is my mother language, the language I grew up with.”¹⁵¹ Another respondent, Xigatze states that their message is to “be careful with the nature and the culture otherwise...[it will] disappear or turn against you.”¹⁵² Despite the fact that these respondents address the issue of language preservation, it is certainly not one of their foremost concerns.

Preservation of Language-A Hidden Concern?

Indeed, while the preservation of language seems to be a main goal for other minorities, it is not overtly emphasised within the Frisian language music scene. This being said, the mere fact that they perform in a minority language implies the need to preserve and promote both the Frisian language and culture. This means that by singing in a minority language, artists represent the vitality and relevance of the Frisian language to their audience. Moreover, singing in Frisian helps preserve the language, as songs and their lyrics perpetuate the language itself. Conceivably, the mere act of singing in Frisian is linguistic preservation. This would also help to explain why the vast majority of survey respondents stated that there was no real message that their music is trying to convey, yet all sing in the Frisian language. One survey respondent stated that there was no real message in the music, but “music has been and will be the voice of the people.”¹⁵³

The Canadian theorist Dr. Marshall McLuhan once said “the medium is the message”.¹⁵⁴ Although McLuhan’s theory was intended for media analysis, it can be applied to the revitalisation of minority languages through music. In the case of Friesland, the medium of the music is the Frisian language. The message therefore, is the assertion of the Frisian identity through language. In this sense, Frisian language music helps to both preserve their language and promote their culture, without explicitly stating that as their objective.

While the Frisian language music scene does not hold any outright message focused on linguistic preservation, the singing in a minority language holds significance on its own. This is proven in the album *In Frysk earbetoan oan Leonard Cohen*, a greatest hits album

¹⁵¹ Genevieve Wickenden, “Minority Language Music Survey,” Ljoubjr and DeRoels Respondent.

¹⁵² Genevieve Wickenden, “Minority Language Music Survey,” Xigatze Respondent.

¹⁵³ Genevieve Wickenden, “Minority Language Music Survey,” Karpjol Respondent.

¹⁵⁴ Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding the Media: The Extension of Man, Second Edition*, (London: Routledge Press, 2001), 7.

of Leonard Cohen songs sung entirely in Frisian. The album and accompanying DVD of the performances is a compilation of some of Cohen's most beloved songs, sung by Frisian language artists.¹⁵⁵ Why release an entire album of cover songs in a minority language, if not to promote the language itself? Applying Critical Discourse Analysis directly to the case of Frisian language music, one can see that despite not insisting upon music as a method of linguistic preservation, there is still a dialogue created by the use of Frisian itself. The discourse created argues for the continued relevance of the Frisian minority language; and a language is only truly relevant if it preserved and spoken by its people.

Chapter 3.2- Promotion of Frisian Identity

The promotion of minority identity both internally and globally is often essential for the preservation of these distinctive cultures. Marketing a minority group as somehow exotic or glamorous will promote outside interest. This in turn allows for the recognition of issues concerning minority groups. The Frisian people are one of the best-marketed minorities. The author was shocked at the extent and brilliance of Frisian marketing.¹⁵⁶ Everywhere products were promoted as authentically Frisian, from liquorice candy to bread and butter. Each product had either a map or the flag of Friesland; sometimes both. This phenomenon is seen in the *Fryslan Boppe* on-line shop, which is "dedicated to providing goods equal to the quality and heritage which makes the Friesians [sic] so proud of who they are."¹⁵⁷ The marketing of minorities is useful as it raises awareness about the minority group themselves. Once interest has been established, the promotion of other concerns within the minority can be shared, discussed and perhaps even changed. The concept of minority marketing is also applied using music. Minority language music calls attention to the minority in which it was created, even if this is unintentional. This is the case with two of the most famous Frisian language bands, Twarres and De Kast. Both groups are from

¹⁵⁵ "In Frysk earbetoan oan Leonard Cohen-Cohen in het Fries," [Online] <http://www.coheninhetfries.nl/> (accessed 13 December 2009).

¹⁵⁶ The author visited Friesland on a conference for several days in the Summer of 2009. The marketing of the Frisian minority was initially shocking, but interesting nonetheless. Moreover, it was striking to compare the Basque Country with Friesland in this respect. As during the author's semester in Euskal Herria, she did not feel as though the region was as active as the Frisians in its promotion of the Basque minority.

¹⁵⁷ "Fryslan Boppe," *Fryslan Boppe* [Online] <http://www.curioshop.com.au/FryslanBoppe.php> (accessed 22 December, 2009).

Friesland, sometimes sing in their Native tongue, and were both commercially successful in the Netherlands and Belgium.

De Kast, meaning “The Closet” were a pop-rock band who attained popularity from the 1990s until they disbanded in 2004. While most of their songs are written in the Dutch language, they have had notable success with songs sung in Frisian both in the Netherlands and in Belgium. Their love ballad, “In Nije Dei” (A New Day) is one such example.¹⁵⁸ Indeed, the international success of De Kast has “succeeded in putting the Northern Part of Friesland on the map.”¹⁵⁹

One of De Kast’s most important contributions to the Frisian language music scene is their song “Eltse grins foarby”, translated as “Crossing Each Border”. The song was written specifically for the Simmer 2000, a language research event hosted by the Fryske Akademy. The purpose of Simmer 2000 was to understand the use of the Frisian language after emigration from the region.¹⁶⁰ As the event took place in Friesland, it also functioned as an international reunion of Frisian immigrants from around the world. “Eltse grins foarby” exudes Frisian pride for freedom, their nature and their way of life, outside Friesland, across borders. The meaning of the song is that a Frisian person does not lose his or her identity even outside Friesland. This is shown in the lyrics: “*The sun sets in the field/the evening falls at the lake/there they are together/and he looks at her once more/...his hand is in her lap/he will be a father soon*” and “*The sun sets in the suburb/the evening fall in the city/ a little girl plays for a little while.../She rambles on and on in the language her mother taught her.*”¹⁶¹ The little girl in the song symbolises the renewal of Frisian culture, and the preservation of the language “her mother taught her.”

¹⁵⁸ “De Kast,” Last FM, [Online] <http://www.last.fm/music/De+Kast> (accessed 22 December, 2009).

¹⁵⁹ Robbert Tilli, “Southern Dutch Act Vullumia! Achieves Chart, Sales Success,” *Billboard* (June 20, 1998), 64 [Online] <http://books.google.com/books?id=w0EAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA64&dq=de+kast+band&cd=2#v=onepage&q=de%20kast%20band&f=false> (accessed 21 December, 2009).

¹⁶⁰ “Simmer 2000: Frisian emigrants,” *Frysk Akademy*, [Online] <http://www.fa.knaw.nl/fa/3departments-and-disciplines/department-of-social-science/simmer-2000-frisian-emigrants> (accessed 20 December, 2009).

¹⁶¹ De Kast, “Eltse grins foarby,” [Online] http://www.getacd.org/listen_PYVDPrXsbv4/eltse_grins_foarby_de_kast_translated_crossing_each_border (accessed 20 December, 2009).

The song also emphasises the freedom of the Frisian people: “*The year almost 1500/ a new reign/they don’t bend under it/They will always stay free.*”¹⁶² This once again illustrates the concept of freedom and liberty as integral to the Frisian identity. One of the final lyrics of the song expresses hope for what the future will hold for the Frisian minority under the European Union: “*The year almost 2000/ Europe is renewing/ the little girl sings and dances and then smiles at me.*”¹⁶³ As the girl is said to be smiling, the audience understands that the future is hopeful for the Frisian language, identity and way of life.

The folk-pop duo Twarres has also been influential in their promotion of the Frisian minority through their music. Twarres, originally consisting of Johan van der Veen and Mirjam Tammer, had almost immediate success following the Liet Song Contest of 1999, where their song “Wêr Bisto” won the people’s choice award.¹⁶⁴ “Wêr Bisto” (Where are you?), became extremely popular throughout the Netherlands. The success of the song was exceptional as “never before in the history of Dutch pop music had a song in the Fries language been at the top of the charts.”¹⁶⁵ While they achieved immense success in the Netherlands, “Wêr Bisto” also reached platinum status in both the Dutch and French-speaking regions of Belgium; “proving there were no language barriers.”¹⁶⁶ What is also interesting about Twarres is that they perform either their songs in Frisian or English, but very rarely in Dutch. This perhaps reflects their desire to promote the Frisian language, while at the same time, remaining commercially viable by singing in English. While their English-language songs “She Couldn’t Laugh”, “Children,” and “I Need To Know” are also quite popular, it is important to note that it is with “Wêr Bisto”, a song sung in a minority language, that they achieved the most success.

In the field work for this study, the use of music as a reflection of identity was echoed in the surveys of various Frisian language bands. One respondent stated: “I am from Friesland, I speak Frisian...although I am Dutch and a European citizen, I am Frisian foremost and above all. And of course, even by using the language, it play[s] a huge part in

¹⁶² De Kast, “Eltse grins foarby.”

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ “Twarres Biography,” Twarres, [Online] <http://www.twarres.com/twarres/twarres-eng/index.html> (accessed 22 December, 2009).

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

my music.”¹⁶⁷ Another respondent to the survey is the singer-songwriter Piter Wilkens. Wilkens, a true Frisian troubadour, also showed the interplay between minority identity and music: “I am a free and independent Frisian and my native background is very important in my songs.”¹⁶⁸ Yet another recurring element in the survey was the statement that singing in Frisian was natural. Many of the respondents said that they had tried to sing in other languages, primarily Dutch and English, but it somehow felt strange. For the Gospel Band Sozo, singing in Dutch “didn’t feel right”, but performing in the Frisian language “gave a sense they... were not ‘acting’.”¹⁶⁹

The singer Nynke Laverman, one of the artists involved with the Frisian collection of Leonard Cohen, also expressed an attachment to her Frisian identity in her responses to the survey. She explains that she feels “most honest, most sincere when I sing in Frisian, because it’s my first language, so it’s the closest to my emotions.” In her answer to the question “How would you define your own identity? Does it play a part in the music you perform?” Laverman responded:

“being Frysk certainly is a part of my identity. I feel Frysk in feeling [a] connection with the land, the ground, the wideness of the landscape, in the language I speak with my friends, family and other Frisians...I think these aspects automatically come into my music, because they’re in me and because of the fact that I only sing in Frysk.”¹⁷⁰

Evidently for many Frisian artists, the connection with their minority identity plays an important role in their music, whether consciously or subconsciously. Moreover, they promote this identity by singing in their Native tongue.

¹⁶⁷ Genevieve Wickenden, “Minority Language Music Survey,” Gurbe Douwstra Respondent.

¹⁶⁸ Genevieve Wickenden, “Minority Language Music Survey,” Piter Wilkens Respondent.

¹⁶⁹ Genevieve Wickenden, “Minority Language Music Survey,” Gospel Band Sozo Respondent.

¹⁷⁰ Genevieve Wickenden, “Minority Language Music Survey,” Nynke Laverman Respondent.

Nynke Laverman is a striking example of the promotion of Frisian identity, but in a particularly unique format. Despite performing in the Frisian language, Laverman is a Fado singer. Fado is a genre of traditional Portuguese music, which is melancholy in tone. Laverman succeeds in connecting cultures, by applying her native language to an entirely different musical tradition. The choice to create Frisian Fado came as a result of being emotionally connected to the Frisian language, but also being attracted to beauty of Fado music.¹⁷¹ Initially worried that to “sing in Fado you should at least be born and raised in Lisbon”, Laverman was so touched by the emotion of the music that she created a hybrid of styles, culminating in the creation of Frisian Fado.¹⁷² Laverman is also interested in other musical cultures. Her travels throughout the world continue to influence her music. For example, her experiences in Mexico and Cuba allowed her to adapt these “Southern musical cultures” by expressing them in the Frisian language.¹⁷³ In her most recent album, *Nomade*, she was again inspired by outside cultural traditions, this time the nomadic culture of Mongolia.¹⁷⁴ Clearly, Nynke Laverman uses her music both to promote her Frisian identity, but at the same time making her audience aware of other musical traditions and cultures. In this sense, her work is a platform for sharing diverse cultural experiences.

Chapter 3.3- Politicisation of the Frisian Minority

In his work *The Cauldron of Ethnicity in the Modern World*, Manning Nash argues that while language “seems straightforwardly a piece of culture” upon further reflection “it is clear that language is often a political fact, at least as much as it is a cultural one.”¹⁷⁵ This is certainly the case with minority language music, as the mere act of singing in a lesser used language is a political statement in itself. Thus, while Frisian language music does not generally manifest itself in a political manner, politics still come across with the mere usage of Frysk. This is exemplified by the group Nanne and Ankie who state “we

¹⁷¹ Elco Schilder, “Nynke Laverman-Fado from the Lowlands of Friesland,” *FolkWorld*, [Online] <http://www.folkworld.de/30/e/nynke.html> (accessed 23 December, 2009).

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ “Nomade,” *Nynke Laverman Official Website*, [Online] <http://www.nynkelaverman.nl/engels/nomade.php> (accessed 23 December, 2009).

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Manning Nash, *The Cauldron of Ethnicity in the Modern World*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 6.

don't sing about politics and we don't make political statements. Still I am sure that our identity shines through in our music.”¹⁷⁶ Therefore, while they are not explicitly political, minority language music is itself a political reality as it moves away from the mainstream.

There is one major exception to the “apolitical nature” of Frisian language music, the band Jitiizer. Jitiizer, translating to ‘Iron’, is a Frisian language punk-rock group with an explicitly pro-Frisian political message. The band began in August of 1991 and is well-known for merging their Frisian identity into their music. In their lyrics, performances and in the symbols that they use, Jitiizer has no qualms in expressing themselves as (exclusively) Frisian. In fact, during their performances, band members dress in stage attire that emphasises nationalist symbols, such as the Frisian flag. Moreover, in the images used for their discography, pro-Frisian symbols are frequently employed. However, it is in their music where the political stance of Jitiizer is best visible. Perhaps their most political song is “Fryslân Boppe”. The title is based on the expression “Fryslân Boppe, Hollan yn’e Groppe”, a slogan meaning something like “Long Live Fryslân, Holland in the Ditch”. The song was written following the 500th anniversary of the incorporation of Friesland into the Netherlands. Obviously, for some Frisians, this was not a joyful celebration. This is reflected in the lyrics of “Fryslân Boppe” very effectively:

*Fryslân 500 years? What kind of bullshit is that?
No, for we have been in the shit for 500 years now
That’s how long these ‘Hollanders’ have occupied our country
And those fake-Frisians that celebrate all of this
We shall cook them and stir around in their brains
Sincere Frisians, light that fire
Because the ancient Frisians kick ass!*¹⁷⁷

In the song, the term “Hollanders” refers not to Dutchmen in particular, but those from the Province of Holland, which is one of the wealthiest regions in the Netherlands. The lyrics demonstrate an explicit dissatisfaction with the occupation of Friesland. It also shows anger towards “fake Frisians” who are complacent in their acceptance of Dutch rule. “Fryslân

¹⁷⁶ Genevieve Wickenden, “Minority Language Music Survey,” Nanne and Ankie Respondent.

¹⁷⁷ Jitiizer, “Fryslân Boppe,” E-Musicpedia.net, [Online] <http://www.e-musicpedia.net/artist/jitiizer-48918/fryslan-boppe-360478.html> (accessed 23 December, 2009), Translation of lyrics by Bas Bilijam.

Boppe” is an interesting song not only for the forcefulness of the lyrics, but also for Jitiizer’s use of Frisian mythology and history:

*So put the Frisian flag high up the pole
And slam those ‘Hollanders’ in their heads
And with all those fake Frisian sissies
Grutte Pier would know what to do...
Otherwise our Fryslân will disappear from the map
A real Frisian is not ‘goody-goody’
But would rather be dead than a slave¹⁷⁸*

In this verse, Jitiizer makes reference to the Frisian folk hero, Grutte Pier (Big Peter). Grutte Pier was a farmer turned warrior who fought the Dutch and Saxons in order to restore Frisian independence.¹⁷⁹ Grutte Pier is perhaps best known for his tongue-twister “Butter, brea, en griene tsiis, wa’t dat net size in gjin oprjochte Fries”. Translating to “Butter, bread and green cheese-whoever cannot say this is no true Frisian”, Grutte Pier used the phrase to establish the identity of individuals who crossed his path. Those who could not repeat the sentence in a passable accent, i.e.: non-Frisians were killed.¹⁸⁰ By implying that “Grutte Pier would know what to do”, Jitiizer is showing their revulsion for those who have given up their minority heritage. The last line of this verse refers to the Frisian saying, “better dead than a slave.” This motto once again underscores the importance of freedom to Frisian identity. The song is used to rally true Frisians in order to ensure that Friesland will never “disappear from the map.” It must be stressed that while the song is violently political in its treatment of Hollanders and especially ‘fake Frisians’, it is not meant to be taken seriously. The exaggerated violence present in the lyrics is used to unambiguously raise awareness about Frisian concerns, but is not a literal message in itself.

¹⁷⁸ Jitiizer, “Fryslân Boppe.”

¹⁷⁹ Timothy Francis McNamara and Carsten Roever, *Language Testing: The Social Dimension*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 154.

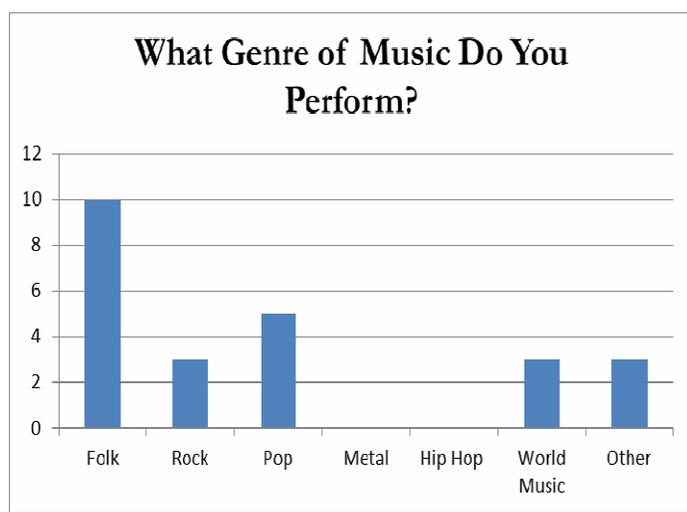
¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 154.

Chapter 3.4- Analysis of Survey Results

The field work of the Frisian language music scene involved the participation of 16 musicians and musical groups. These include Bacon and Bones, Dets Laif, Gospelband Sozo, Gurbe Douwstra, Hollewaai, Kapriol, Karst Berkenbosch, Ljoubjr and DeRoels, Nanne and Ankie, Nynke Laverman, Piter Wilkens, RemoliNo, Skuor, Souldada, Xigatze and Musical Koor Sjonge Jonge.

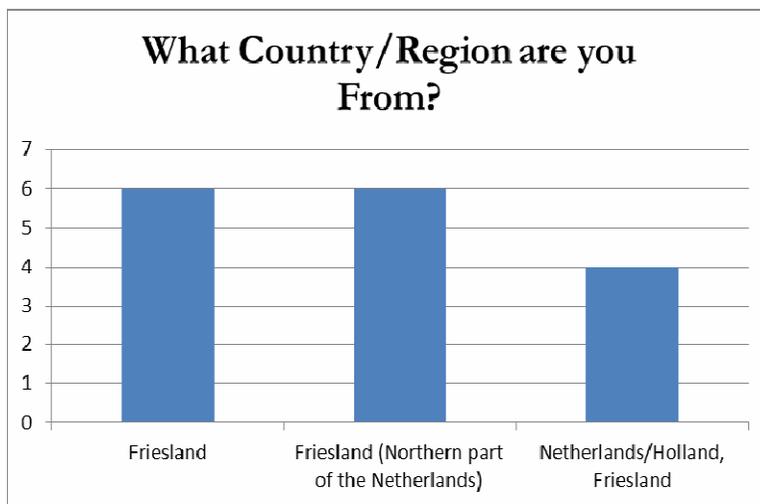
One of the first questions in the survey was “What genre would you classify the music that your band performs?” This was asked in order to identify if the Frisian language music scene is associated with a particular genre. In contrast to the Basque case study, the Frisian language scene tends to be more diverse in its choice of musical genres. While most respondents classified their music under the ‘Folk’ genre, ‘Pop’, ‘Rock’, ‘World Music’ and ‘Other’ were also common responses. The concept of ‘Other’, originally included ‘World Music’, but the sheer number of responses made it necessary to illustrate it separately on the graph. Perhaps the preference for ‘World Music’ reflects many Frisians’ interest in other cultures and societies. The other genres listed under ‘Other’ included ‘Country’ and ‘Gospel’. The complete absence of any ‘Metal’ or ‘Hip Hop’ responses is interesting. As these genres generally indicate political inclinations, this may be seen as proof that the Frisian language scene is not as militant as the Basque or Welsh counterparts.

Chart 9- What Genre of Music Do You Perform? Frisian Case



“What country/region are you from?” (Chart 10) was also one of the questions asked in the survey. 12 respondents listed that they were from the region of Friesland. While six of these respondents simply listed Friesland as their home region, six others felt the need to clarify by adding its geographic location *within the country* of the Netherlands. Moreover, four of the bands surveyed placed the country *before* their region. It can be argued that the way in which the bands responded to the question may illustrate their sense of belonging to Friesland or the Netherlands. More specifically, it may be interpreted as the degree to which they feel Frisian over Dutch, or vice versa.

Chart 10- What Country/Region are you From? Frisian Case

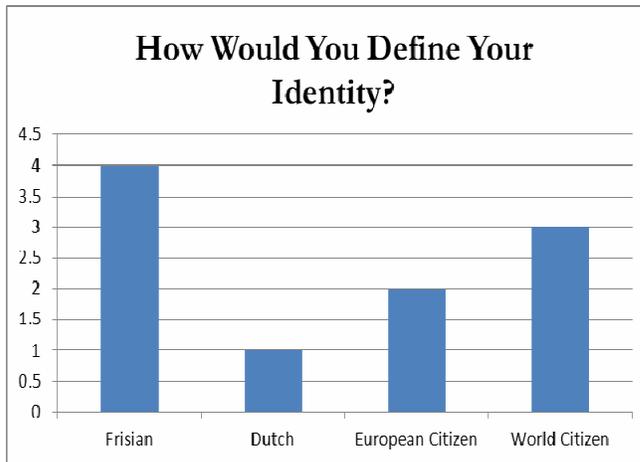


One of the most interesting set of answers in the field work were the Frisian responses the question “How Would you Define Your Identity?”. There were four clear responses: Frisian, Dutch, European or World Citizen. Some individuals expressed an attachment to more than one category, while others were very specific on their identification. While it is perhaps natural that most respondents identified as Frisians, what is most unique is that many of them classified themselves as Europeans and/or World Citizens. For example, one respondent identified himself as a “‘world citizen’ of European origin” and continues by stating that he believes in regions “more than in states.”¹⁸¹ Perhaps the high number of individuals expressing a European identity reflects the fact that

¹⁸¹ Genevieve Wickenden, “Minority Language Music Survey,” Nanne and Ankie Respondent.

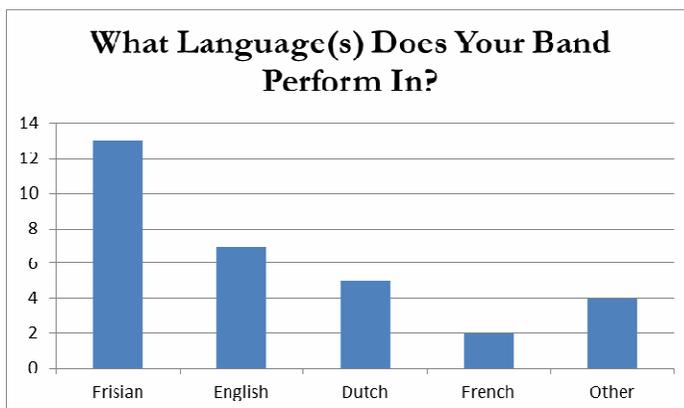
the Netherlands was one of the founding members of the European Union. Moreover, Friesland has always looked beyond its borders. This is reflected as early as the 1920s when the slogan of the Young Frisian society was “Fryslân and the World.”¹⁸² This may be used to explain why many musicians within the Frisian scene see themselves as ‘World Citizens’.

Chart 11- How Would You Define Your Identity? Frisian Case



The global outlook is also reflected in Chart 12 will shows diversity in the sheer number of languages within the Frisian music scene. While the inclusion of English and Dutch makes sense in terms of marketability, many of the respondents also performed in French, Portuguese, Greek, Romany and even Esperanto.

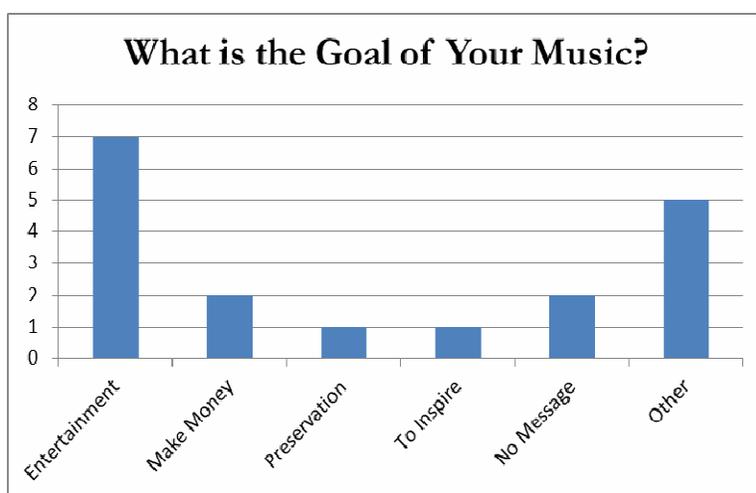
Chart 12- What Language(s) Does Your Band Perform In? Frisian Case



¹⁸² Durk Gorter, “Frisian as a European Minority Language,” [KNAW Repository](http://depot.knaw.nl/3011/1/20897.pdf), [Online] <http://depot.knaw.nl/3011/1/20897.pdf> (accessed 8 November, 2009).

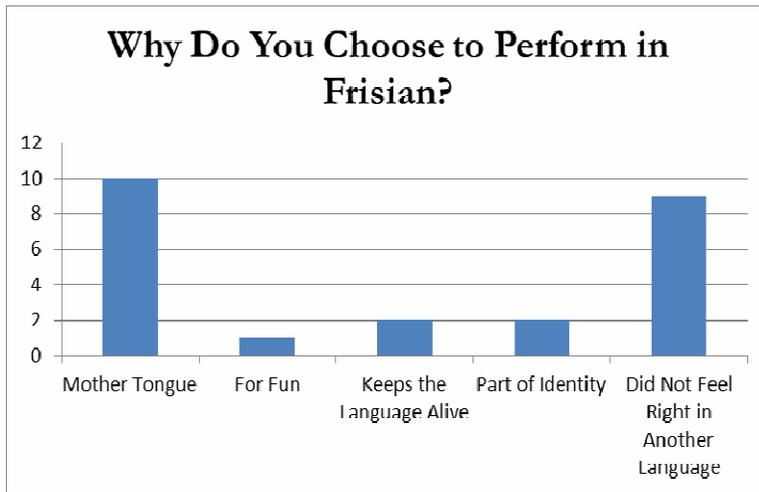
Some of the most important questions in the survey asked respondents to determine the goals, messages and reasons behind performing in the Frisian language. Chart 13 shows the goals of the Frisian language artists as revealed in the field work. Firstly, most of the respondents stated that the main goal of their music was for entertainment or for fun. Other respondents wrote that making some money was important. What is key however, is that very few respondents noted that the goal of their music was either to preserve the Frisian language/culture or to inspire others. This is again is in direct contrast with the Basque language movement.

Chart 13-What is the Goal of Your Music? Frisian Case



In terms of the reasons behind respondents' decision to sing in a minority language, the results were also quite surprising (Chart 14). Firstly, most listed practical reasons for performing in Frisian. For example, most listed that Frisian was their mother tongue and therefore a more natural choice than any other language. Others stated that performing in another language did not feel right as they were better able to express themselves in Frisian. Moreover, while some respondents did mention they sang in Frisian to preserve the language and culture, it was certainly not their main objective. This again differs from the Basque case where the main purposes of Radical Rock was protest and the strengthening of the Euskera language and culture.

Chart 14-Why Do You Choose to Perform in Frisian?



While the Frisian minority music scene might not be purposefully political, they do express a great fondness for their language. This is shown by the frequency of Frisian language use as listed by survey respondents. 85% of respondents stated that they used the Frisian language ‘very often’. This shows the pervasive nature of the Frisian language itself. It can be inferred therefore that it is quite natural for Frisians to speak their own language. Moreover, as Chart 16 illustrates, the use of Frisian is widespread, and not kept solely within the confines of home. It also shows that there are ample opportunities to use Frisian in the workplace and at school.

Chart 15- Frequency of Frisian Language Use

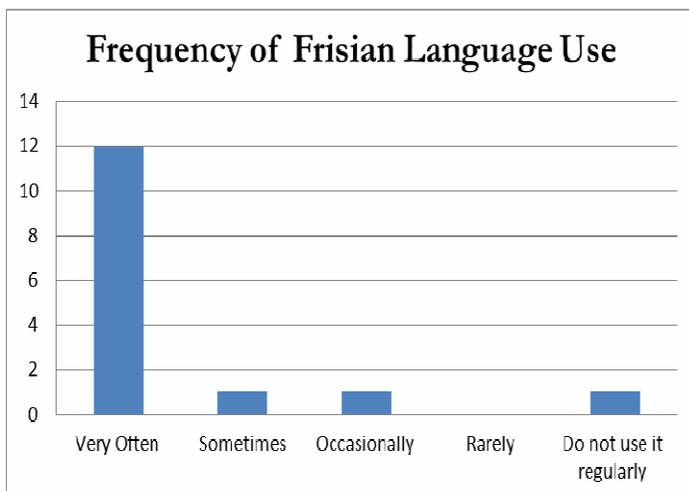


Chart 16- When Do you Use the Frisian Language?

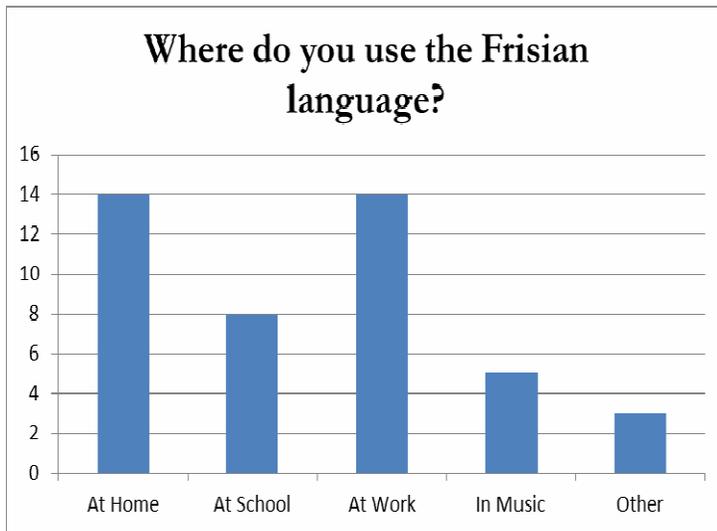
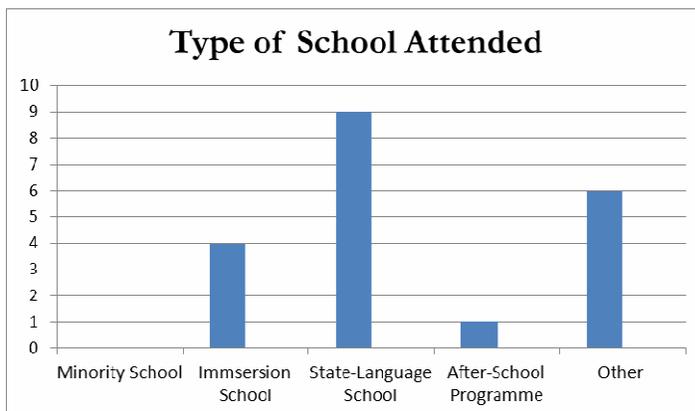


Chart 16 illustrates the type of school frequented by the survey respondents. Most respondents attended State-Language schools. It can be inferred that respondents who attended these types of schools are predominantly older. This statement is confirmed by one respondent: “I belong to the older generation. In my days, late 50’s early 60’s, we didn’t have education in Frisian.¹⁸³ However, four respondents confirmed that they attended Immersion schools. These schools are a relatively recent phenomenon, but are becoming increasingly popular. Moreover, many respondents listed that they also learned and perfected the Frisian language at home.

Chart 17- Type of School Attended, Frisian Case



¹⁸³ Genevieve Wickenden, “Minority Language Music Survey,” Gurbe Dowstra Respondent.

The survey results show a flourishing Frisian language music scene, and indeed, a healthy minority in general. Speaking the Frisian language seems to be the norm for many within Friesland, which illustrates that the language has been normalised in the everyday life of its speakers. This being said, the Frisian language music scene is certainly different in tone and in nature to the Basque example. Whereas the Basque scene is generally active in its preservation, promotion and politicisation of its minority, the Frisian case seems to be significantly more passive. The Frisian language scene therefore, exists not for any militant, activist purpose, but for the pure enjoyment and normality of speaking in one's mother tongue. Moreover, its abilities to preserve the language and promote the culture are all inferred results, as opposed to actual concrete goals. This is also the general rule for the issue of politicisation of minority concerns, with the exception of the band Jitiizer. Regardless, the Frisian language music scene still functions, in its implied and symbolic role, of preserving, promoting and politicising its minority, even if these results are not the original objectives of the artists themselves.

Chapter 4- A Brief History of Wales

Figure 4- Map of Wales ¹⁸⁴



“For Wales- see England.” This notorious entry in an early edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica symbolises the struggle of the Welsh culture over the past 500 years.¹⁸⁵ With a population of less than 3 million inhabitants, Wales is part of the United Kingdom, under the devolved Welsh Assembly.¹⁸⁶ Welsh (Cymraeg), along with Breton and Cornish, belongs to the Brythonic branch of the Celtic language family. According to linguists, Welsh is one of the oldest living languages in Europe.

While it is considered to be a country in its own right, the Welsh have struggled in maintaining their identity since the Acts of Union (1536-1543). These Acts officially assimilated Wales into the political system of England. This was detrimental as the Acts entrenched Anglicisation as an imposed reality as English became the only official

¹⁸⁴ “Map of Wales,” *Worldmaps.com* [Online]
<http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/europe/lgcolor/ukwcolor.htm>

(accessed 9 December, 2009)

¹⁸⁵ Quoted in Richard Rawlings, “The New Model Wales,” *Journal of Law and Society* 25, no. 4 (December 1998), 493.

¹⁸⁶ Minahan, *Encyclopedia of the Stateless Nations*, 2046.

language in Wales. Moreover, the Acts enabled only those who renounced Welsh and exercised “the speech and language of English”¹⁸⁷ to hold office, manors or fees within the realm. This resulted in the adoption of English as the mother tongue of the Welsh ruling class.¹⁸⁸ Moreover, it created a “classic example of an internal colony.”¹⁸⁹ It can be argued that the Welsh identity only survived assimilation due to the Welsh language, “itself safeguarded by geographical remoteness.”¹⁹⁰

While Welsh remained the language spoken by the majority, it was quickly being eroded through the effects of Industrialization and later through the spread of English-language media, especially after the Second World War.¹⁹¹ What had the most detrimental effect on the sense of ‘Welshness’ however, was the publication of the Royal Commission Reports on the State of Education in Wales (1842-1847), later known as the “Treachery of the Blue Books”. This commission was conducted in order to understand the condition of Welsh education. The Commission reported that the reason behind the ‘backwardness’ of Wales was the Welsh language itself¹⁹²: “The Welsh language is a vast drawback to Wales and a manifold barrier to the moral progress and commercial prosperity of the people. It is not easy to over-estimate its evil effects.”¹⁹³ The commission resulted in English becoming the sole medium of instruction in the Welsh school system. As children were no longer being formally educated in Welsh, the language began to decline drastically.¹⁹⁴ The loss of the language was further precipitated by social stigmatisation of Welsh within the

¹⁸⁷ “Laws in Wales, Act 1535, Section XX,” The UK Statute Law Database [Online]

<http://www.statutelaw.gov.uk/content.aspx?activeTextDocId=1517920&versionNumber=1> (accessed 9 May, 2009).

¹⁸⁸ Kenneth O. Morgan, “Welsh Nationalism: The Historical Background,” Journal of Contemporary History, 6, no. 1 Nationalism and Separatism (1971): 154.

¹⁸⁹ Charlotte Davies, *Welsh Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*, (New York: Praeger, 1989), 60.

¹⁹⁰ Michael Keating, *State and Regional Nationalism- Territorial Politics and the European State*, (London: Harvester & Wheatsleaf, 1988), 27.

¹⁹¹ Minahan, 2049.

¹⁹² H. Paul Manning, “The Streets of Bethesda: The Slate Quarrier and the Welsh Language in the Welsh Liberal imagination,” Language and Society 33, no. 4 (2004): 528.

¹⁹³ R.R W. Lingen, Jellynger C. Symons and H. R Vaughan Johnson, “Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales, Part 2: Brecknock, Cardigan, Radnor and Monmouth. Part IX,” *Royal Commission Reports on the State of Education in Wales*, The National Library of Wales [Online]

<http://digidol.llgc.org.uk/METS/SEW00003b/frames?div=66&subdiv=0&locale=en&mode=reference> (accessed 11 May, 2009).

¹⁹⁴ Minahan, 523.

educational system. Children caught speaking Welsh in school were forced to wear a wooden board with the letters “WN” – “Welsh Not” around their necks.¹⁹⁵ Although this is perhaps a very extreme example of the demonization of the language, general perception of Welsh has, until recently, been overwhelmingly negative. Welsh was ridiculed for being ridiculous, backward and antiquated. Not only was Welsh denigrated in public, it was also degraded by the English government. This is shown in the writings of Matthew Arnold, a school inspector, who argued “it must always be the desire of a Government to render its dominions, as far as possible, homogenous... Sooner or later, the difference of language between Wales and England will probably be effaced... an event which is socially and political so desirable.”¹⁹⁶

Over time, the political and social forces working against Wales led to an overall decay of the language. By the 1961 census, it was discovered that no more than 1/5 of the population of Wales could speak the language, and in many areas, it had completely died out.¹⁹⁷ In retrospect however, the publication of the “Blue Books” and the awareness of the possible extinction of the Welsh language, caused a nation-wide revelation which equated Welsh nationhood with the preservation of the Welsh language. The Welsh people saw their language as “the essential test of nationality” because a nation without its own language was “bereft of its humanity also.”¹⁹⁸ For the Welsh minority, the issue of language took on a “symbolic significance well beyond the practical issues of communication.”¹⁹⁹

The re-evaluation of the Welsh language as core to the identity of Wales produced an entirely different tone for the modern expression of nationalist sentiment. This is best exemplified in Saunders Lewis’ 1962 BBC radio broadcast, aptly titled “Tynged Yr Iaith” (The Fate of the Language).²⁰⁰ Lewis, a well-respected poet and playwright turned activist,

¹⁹⁵ Minahan, 2049.

¹⁹⁶ As quoted in Saunders Lewis, “Tynged Yr Iaith,” (February 1962) National Library of Wales, [Online] <http://www.llgc.org.uk/yngyrchu/iaith/TyngedIaith/tynged.htm> (accessed 18 December, 2009).

¹⁹⁷ Morgan, 171.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, 172.

¹⁹⁹ Susan R. Pitchford, “Image-Making Movements: Welsh Nationalism and Stereotype Transformation,” Sociological Perspectives 44, no. 1 (Spring 2001), 53.

²⁰⁰ R. Merfyn Jones, “Beyond Identity? The Reconstruction of the Welsh,” The Journal of British Studies 31, No. 4 Britishness and Europeanness: Who Are the British Anyway? (October 1992), 351.

predicted that the Welsh language would soon face extinction. He argued that only through radical and revolutionary means could such a cultural crisis be averted.²⁰¹ Lewis' impassioned speech was given even more weight as the release of the Welsh language census had appeared only a year earlier, and was thus fresh in the minds of the public. He called for "resolve, willpower, struggle and effort" to defend the Welsh language and its cultural distinctiveness.²⁰² While he later considered himself an "utter failure" to the Welsh language cause, Lewis proved inspirational to others.²⁰³ The most immediate success of his speech was the foundation of Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg (The Welsh Language Society), a pressure group dedicated to "campaigning for the future of the Welsh language."²⁰⁴

Since its establishment on August 4th, 1962, WLS has been responsible for many gains for Welsh, such as the Welsh Language Acts, bilingual road signs and the creation of S4C, a Welsh-language television channel.²⁰⁵ While the Welsh Language Society may turn their attention to other issues, they always have "an eye to its central mission: enhancing the legal and social status of the language."²⁰⁶ Raising awareness on key Welsh-language issues is not only possible through established social and political routes, but also through the media. The music scene in particular has been extremely influential in the Welsh revival. Welsh language artists have consistently used music as a means of preserving the Welsh language, promoting the Welsh cause and politicising their demands. Their efforts have created a vibrant and diverse music scene which has done much to support the Welsh minority.

²⁰¹ Jones, 351.

²⁰² Geraint H. Jenkins, "The Welsh Language in the Twentieth Century," North American Journal of Welsh Studies 1, No. 2 (Summer 2001), 63.

²⁰³ Darryl Jones, "'I Failed Utterly': Saunders Lewis and the Cultural Politics of Welsh Modernism," The Irish Review No. 19 (Spring-Summer 1996), 22.

²⁰⁴ "So, what is Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg?" [Online] Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg, http://cymdeithas.org/2004/05/31/what_is_cymdeithas_yr_iaith.html (accessed 18 December, 2009).

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Pitchford, 51.

Chapter 4.1-Music as Linguistic Preservation in Wales

*“To acquiesce in the death of a language which was the heritage of our forefathers for one thousand five hundred years is to despise mankind. Woe betide the society that despises mankind.”*²⁰⁷

Much of the success of the Welsh language musical revival, called ‘Cool Cymru’ (roughly translating to “hip Welsh”) can be attributed to the importance of music in Welsh culture. Wales has always been considered a land of song, and the Welsh hold fast to their musical roots. Moreover, as the Welsh language increasingly formed the heart of nationalism, it was understood that if the language disappeared, there would be nothing left to resist the total assimilation of Wales into the English fold. Music therefore, seemed the ideal vehicle to protect the Welsh language.

While music functions on the one hand as a means of linguistic preservation it can also be used to improve the position of the language within society, as “the status of the language denotes the status of the group that speaks it.”²⁰⁸ In the case of the Welsh revival, this meant doing two things: reversing the decline of Welsh speakers and making speaking Welsh fashionable. In a census taken in 1880, 70% of the population (roughly 1 million people) spoke Welsh. By the 1961 census, this number dwindled to half a million speakers, or 26% of the population.²⁰⁹ One statistic suggests that by the early 1960s, 200 Welsh speakers were being lost every week.²¹⁰ Attempts to revitalise the language were begun notably by Plaid Cymru, the foremost Welsh nationalist party and the Welsh Language Society. At their core these groups focused on enhancing the legal, social and political status of the Welsh language.²¹¹ This is reflected in their slogan “a nation without language is a nation without heart.”²¹² Plaid Cymru has made numerous gains in their fight towards improving the situation of the Welsh. These include the policy of bilingualism (1993) and

²⁰⁷ Quote by Saunders Lewis, in Jenkins, 66.

²⁰⁸ Pitchford, 52.

²⁰⁹ E. Wyn James, “Painting the World Green: Dafydd Iwan and the Welsh Protest Ballad,” (First Published) *Folk Music Journal* 8, no. 5 (2005): 594-618. Cardiff University, 2006, [Online] <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/insrv/libraries/scolar/digital/welshballads/painting.html> (accessed 10 May, 2009).

²¹⁰ *Ibid*, “Painting the World Green.”

²¹¹ Pitchford, 51.

²¹² Norman Berdichevsky, *Nations, Language and Citizenship*, (North Carolina: McFarland & Company Inc, 2004), 144.

reinstating Welsh-language schools. Success in the educational sphere is particularly important as minority language education ensures that subsequent generations are learning the language. Indeed, with Welsh being recognized in both the political and educational spheres, the language started to gain some headway. This is illustrated in a 2001 demographic report which shows a 7% increase in the number of Welsh speakers since 1971.²¹³ This is no insignificant statistic, as it proves that the Welsh language is on the rise, no doubt due to the popularisation of bilingual education in Wales.

The Cool Cymru scene is interesting in the way in which it has succeeded in popularising the Welsh language. One of the key figures in this movement is Dafydd Iwan, considered by many as the ‘grandfather’ of contemporary Welsh music. Seeing that Welsh was in decline, Iwan used his talent as a singer and songwriter to promote his Native tongue. Born in 1943, Iwan is the grandson of one of the founders of Plaid Cymru.²¹⁴ With his involvement in Plaid Cymru and the Welsh Language Society, Dafydd Iwan succeeded in mobilising the Welsh music-scene in a “nationalist linguistic direction.”²¹⁵ His songs, sung in Welsh, were produced at a time when folk and protest music were at their height, and the Welsh language was at its lowest. Moreover, his enthusiasm for the Welsh language and culture are in stark contrast with other singers of his generation like Tom Jones, who despite being born in Wales never embraced their identity by singing in Welsh. In his music, Dafydd Iwan makes his support for the Welsh language explicit. In “Can yr Ysgol” (School Song), he talks about the strangeness of being educated in English, but living your life in Welsh: “*And in the school I had/History lessons, Geography lessons/English lessons all the time/And a lesson in Welsh, fair play! Because I was a little Welshman.*”²¹⁶ His work gained exposure throughout Wales, and opened the door for other like-minded artists to participate and perform in the burgeoning Welsh-language music scene.

²¹³ “Wales's Population -A demographic overview, 2008”: 55.

²¹⁴ Plaid Cymru is a political party in Wales. Established in 1925, the party is deeply connected to the pursuit of an autonomous Wales and Welsh nationalism in general.

²¹⁵ Roger Wallis and Krister Malm, “Sain Cymru: The Role of the Welsh Phonographic Industry in the Development of a Welsh Language Pop/Rock/Folk Scene,” *Popular Music* 3, Producers and Markets (1983), 85.

²¹⁶ Dafydd Iwan, “School Song” (Can yr ysgol), 1967. Quoted in Wallis, “Sain Cymru,”: 85-86.

Thanks to the work of Dafydd Iwan, artists are now able to release music in the Welsh tongue. After developing a strong-fan base, many artists often release individual songs or even entire albums in Welsh. Such is the case with Catatonia and Super Furry Animals. Essentially, by placing Welsh within the musical sphere, artists utilise their fan base to effectively promote the language throughout Wales and the world. Moreover, the issue of language preservation became the “dominant dynamic” of contemporary Welsh music, which was “tightly integrated within a coherent and consistent political and social consciousness.”²¹⁷ While singing in Welsh itself helped to preserve the language, many artists addressed the loss of their mother tongue in their music: “*Hip hop poetry in motion/Streets are in commotion/Our mother tongue was stolen.*”²¹⁸ Indeed, Cool Cymru artists are helping to raise awareness that the Welsh language needs support or it will disappear.

The use of the Welsh language in popular music has had a profound impact on the image of the Welsh nation. The Cool Cymru movement put Wales on the map, as more Welsh artists are making valuable contributions to the international musical scene. This is shown by one of Catatonia’s songs, entitled “International Velvet”: “*Awaken sleepy Wales, land of song...Every day when I wake up I thank the Lord I’m Welsh.*”²¹⁹ In this song, the link between music and Welsh identity is underscored. The last line, “thank the Lord I’m Welsh” shows that by the late 1990s, one could be proud of having Welsh heritage. Indeed, Cool Cymru has contributed to the normalisation of the Welsh language within the music industry. Due to the success of the originators of Cool Cymru, it is no longer seen as ‘strange’ or ‘foreign’ for a band to sing in their Native tongue. Thus, Cool Cymru has contributed a great deal to the preservation of the Welsh language as bands inspired the increasing acceptance of the Welsh language in the music industry and society as a whole.

²¹⁷ Meic Llewellyn, “Popular Music in the Welsh Language and the Affirmation of Youth Identities,” *Popular Music* 19, no. 3 (October 2000), 320.

²¹⁸ MC SLEIFAR (Steffan Cravos) and G MAN (Gruff Meredith), *Tystion*, “Shrug off ya Complex” *Shrug off ya Complex* (1998), [Online] <http://www.ankst.co.uk/tystion%20page.htm> (accessed 10 May, 2009).

²¹⁹ *Catatonia*, “International Velvet” *International Velvet* (1998) [Online] <http://www.lyricstime.com/catatonia-international-velvet-welsh-and-english-lyrics.html> (accessed 2 May, 2009).

Chapter 4.2-Cool Cymru and the Promotion of the Welsh Cause

The minority music revival in Wales functions as a way of promoting the Welsh cause internally and throughout the world. Due to the groundwork of Dafydd Iwan in the 1960s, contemporary Welsh music is a genuine movement and popular even outside Wales. Indeed, while many within the industry find the term ‘Cool Cymru’ a rather unfortunate moniker” it is evident that the Welsh language music scene is not “some media-manufactured hype.”²²⁰ The explosion of Welsh language artists is remarkable as it developed a distinct alternative to the prevailing Anglo-American trend.

In *Blerwytirhwng?: The Place of Welsh Pop Music*, Sarah Hill argues that the Cool Cymru movement also succeeded in overturning the prevailing (British) opinion of Welsh culture as boring and uninventive. Using newspaper articles from before the height of the Cool Cymru movement, Hill shows how Welsh culture was perceived before and after the mainstream success of Welsh-language artists. One article states: “the Welsh love music, but who have they shared with the wider world? Tom Jones- a tax exile with a tight perm and tighter trousers...Such is the dismal fate of all Welsh culture. Everything from comedy to literature is at best ridiculed and at worst ignored. Even at a time when all things Celtic are cool and Scotland and Ireland are enjoying a cultural renaissance, Wales cowers without a shred of credibility.”²²¹ While there was a thriving music scene before the mid-1990s, it was only then that “the Anglophone market that the existence of Welsh popular music was ever given any serious notice.”²²² Cool Cymru therefore gave Wales a sort of cultural credibility in the international arena.

Dafydd Iwan and other early founders of the Welsh language music scene helped to originate a genre that could also be made profitable. This is significant in the music industry as it is still a commercial business, and thus revenue is important. At the same time that Iwan was writing his songs, numerous changes were being made in the realm of Welsh entertainment and media. This included the creation of Radio Cymru (1977) and S4C, a

²²⁰ David Owens, "The Rise of Welsh Rock and Pop," *Wales Arts International*, (2006) [Online] <http://www.wai.org.uk/index.cfm?UUID=0C87D74F-65BF-7E43-3D2A303B1BC79405> (accessed 15 December, 2009).

²²¹ As quoted in Hill, 190.

²²² *Ibid*, 191.

Welsh language television channel (1982). Moreover, a number of Welsh labels became increasingly productive and successful, including Ankst, Ankstmusik, Sain and Fflach.²²³ Following the exposure of artists on Welsh language radio stations, these labels could profit from Welsh music. It seems a rather obvious statement, but for a minority group, it is an important one. Furthermore, the existence of Welsh media outlets allows for the continuation of the Welsh-musical revival. This is illustrated by Ankst Management and Ankstmusik records which launched the internationally successful Super Furry Animals and Gorky's Zygotic Mynci, and continues to be influential for new Welsh-language artists. Indeed the development of the Welsh music industry has opened doors, as major labels are now "more inclined to look in Wales for new talent."²²⁴ Moreover, because of the success of Welsh language bands outside of Wales, more artists are seeing that their Native tongue will not hold them back from being commercially successful outside their own region.

While many bands considered as part of the Cool Cymru trend, objected to the association, their connection with the movement allowed them to make "massive headway" as "suddenly [they] had serious press about them."²²⁵ Indeed, Cool Cymru gave a certain amount of external credibility to artists who happened to perform in Welsh. Bands at the beginning of the movement were often bombarded with comments reacting to their "Welshness". Usually about half of the interview would focus on the band being Welsh "as if it was a miraculous thing."²²⁶ Eventually, the initial surprise wore off, which "paved the way for the success of other Welsh language bands."²²⁷ For musicians now entering the industry, their Welshness is no longer as emphasised. According to Epyllt Williams, Development Manager of Community Music Wales (CMW), "Cool Cymru was "a positive thing really...[although] the name wasn't great" as the movement succeeding in normalising Welsh in the music industry."²²⁸

²²³ Llewellyn, 324.

²²⁴ Epyllt Williams, Interview.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Ibid.

Minority language music is also useful in its ability to promote the culture in which it is created. For example, there is a clear association between Welsh music and national identity.²²⁹ This is expressed in an interview with the band Pep le Pew: “We’re mongrels! There’s a Welshness there, [even] apart from the lyrics. There is a Welsh sort of sound there.”²³⁰ However, Welsh language music has also been able to create bonds between Wales and the outside world, especially between other minority groups. In this sense, “music [is] not only a form of entertainment but also a means of renovating and confirming a shared counter and subcultural identity.”²³¹ This is illustrated in much of the work of the band Tystion, especially in the song “Dyma’n Rhag (This is my Curse): *“We’re breaking down the borders/Starting with their master plans/Aiming high with Tystion/We can rock, no problem/The beats and music take us out of trouble, instead of destruction and violence/I use my words and voice/Off your knees/plan and design the future/leave the past create the future.../A free Wales built on faith.”*²³² In “Dyma’n Rhag”, Tystion states their intention to “break down borders” both within and outside of Wales to effect change. Another example can be seen in the music of “The Stilletoes”, a new Welsh punk-rock band. On their myspace.com page, they list one of their new songs “Cytgan”. They write that “this piece was written as a “real song for wales” (sic). The band states that they are “singing to every welsh (sic) person in this song, open your eyes!...Stop the racism towards the english (sic) and the rest of the world!...it doesn’t matter what country we’re from, our blood is red, our bones are white and we’re all people with feelings.”²³³ In response, one commentator writes: “You said it! Shame the OTHERS are so thick! It relates to a lot of other countries, like here in CATALUNYA (Spain).”²³⁴ This illustrates that modern Welsh-language music is creating links between groups outside Wales and with other

²²⁹ Llewelyn, 328.

²³⁰ Debs, “Interview with Pep le Pew,” *Welsh Bands Weekly* [Online] <http://welshbandsweekly.com/english/articles/interviews/plp9half.html> (accessed 23 December, 2009).

²³¹ Christian Lahusen, “The Aesthetics of Radicalism: The Relationship between Punk and the Patriotic Nationalism Movement of the Basque Country,” *Popular Music* 12, No.3 (October 1993), 268.

²³² MC SLEIFAR (Steffan Cravos) and G MAN (Gruff Meredith), *Tystion*, “Dyma’n Rhag (This is my Curse) *Shrug off ya Complex* (1998), [Online] <http://www.ankst.co.uk/tystion%20page.htm> (accessed 10 May, 2009).

²³³ The Stilletoes, “Cytgan” [Online] 14 February, 2009 *MySpace.com Blogs* <http://blogs.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=blog.view&friendId=90514229&blogId=470718082> (accessed 14 May, 2009).

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

minorities; in this case the Catalan minority of Spain. By sharing experiences with those outside Wales, the Cool Cymru scene is affirming its own identity and presence in the world.

Chapter 4.3-Music and the Welsh Political Struggle

Welsh nationalism is deeply connected with the Cool Cymru movement. Nationalism, a pivotal question for minority groups, is defined as a movement “which can empower large numbers of ordinary people...seek[ing] to provide a state for a given ‘nation’ or...to advance the supposed interests of its own ‘nation-state’.”²³⁵ Welsh nationalists began using music as a means of communicating their own political ideals for the “New Wales”. According to Meic Llewellyn, the Welsh language music scene “derived its particular character, and reached its highest point in political songs”. Not coincidentally, it is these songs that have also sold the best.²³⁶

Dafydd Iwan was extremely political in many of his works. Iwan’s political side is still with the Welsh people as he has been the President of Plaid Cymru since 2003. An ardent patriot with a rare gift for song, Iwan is able to create rousing lyrics and infectious melodies to “communicate the ideals of the Welsh nationalist movement to the popular imagination.”²³⁷ This can be seen in his “Peintio’r Byd yn Wyrdd” (Paint the World Green). The song was composed during the road-signs campaign, wherein posts that were not bilingual were wiped out with green paint by Welsh nationalists. The colour green was chosen as a symbol of Celtic pride.²³⁸ The song states: “*Farewell to bending the knee/And licking the arse of the English/Farewell to vile serfdom/ We shout with united voice/We’ll take our song to the fields/And we’ll shout in the streets... We’ll paint the world green, friends/Paint the world green.*”²³⁹ “Paint the World Green” is a demand for complete autonomy of Wales from England, as the Welsh are sick of their subservient existence

²³⁵ Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997): 3.

²³⁶ Llewellyn, 320.

²³⁷ James, “Painting the World Green.”

²³⁸ James, “Painting the World Green.”

²³⁹ Dafydd Iwan, “Paint the World Green”. Quoted in James, “Painting the World Green.”

(“licking the arse of the English”). The title itself suggests that by “painting the world green”, Iwan wished to extend the struggle beyond fields and streets, all over the globe.

While many Cool Cymru songs are humorous in tone, they do not take politics lightly. In fact, some of the most influential groups in the Cool Cymru scene are ardently political in their goals and purpose. One such example is the hip-hop/rap group, Tystion (The Witnesses). Formed in 1996, Tystion used music to call for direct action in Welsh politics. Their song “Shrug off ya Complex” is about initiating political change:

*Gonna shrug off the complex with help from my lyrics...
A way forward, new century
Figuring out how to be free
Stop getting impeded, motivation's needed
It comes from within, so let us begin
Shrugging off the complex
it's more than a reflex
Not afraid to stand out or shout
No part of this British State so we're getting rid of our hate
Our country's coming back to us
No bother, no mess, no fuss, no less than we expect
Got to direct anger in a positive way*

From these lyrics Tystion is expressing their desire for “a way forward” for Wales. They suggest this can be achieved by giving “*us a written constitution/Further devolution*” and by using music as “*the voice of revolution*”.²⁴⁰ The song also implies that “*motivation's needed/It comes from within*”, meaning that popular support is needed from the Welsh people in order to create change. The theme of self-determination is echoed in many of their other songs including “I know y' know”:

*Is this system just a game?...
There's more to this than meets the eye*

²⁴⁰ Tystion, “Shrug off the Complex.”

*Our words expose
The lies around us
...Running around the country
With freedom comes relief
Still kicking against the pricks
Enough of this oppression
About time to re-energise Wales
Let's unite and organise...
Make yourself a promise
To walk forward with the scene
I know Y'Know.*²⁴¹

In this song, Tystion is again calling for political transformation in Wales. Indeed, the goal of their music is to “re-energise” the fight for change. The lyrics once more remind the audience that political change requires popular support “*Let’s united and organise...make yourself a promise/to walk forward with the scene.*” While many of their songs call for radical action, Tystion further politicises their music through the infusion of historical memory. By referencing specific events and individuals in their music, Tystion rallies listeners in favour of their message. In the song “Remember Tryweryn”, Tystion uses the town as a symbol for an independent Wales. The flooding of the Tryweryn community was ordered by England in 1965, for use as a water reservoir. The song begins: “*It’s about time that the history of Wales/Gets the platform it deserves/Remember Tryweryn/Resistance by the people/I can see the future, improving every year/Our hands on the wheel.*”²⁴² The use of historical memory is common in political songs as they are particularly adept at inspiring emotional responses.

The politicisation of Welsh politics is also a frequent element in the music of Y Cyrff (The Bodies). Y Cyrff was Indie band, which began in the 1980s. Two of their

²⁴¹ MC Sleifar (Steffan Cravos) and G Man (Gruff Meredith), *Tystion*, “I know y’know” *Shrug off ya Complex* (1998) [Online] <http://www.ankst.co.uk/tystion%20page.htm> 10 May, 2009.

²⁴² MC Sleifar (Steffan Cravos) and G Man (Gruff Meredith), *Tystion*, “Remember Trwyeren,” *Shrug off ya Complex* (1998), [Online] <http://www.ankst.co.uk/tystion%20page.htm> 10 May, 2009.

members later joined Catatonia, arguably one of the most successful Welsh bands, and a founding group of the Cool Cymru movement. In their song “Y Deffro”, the band shows their own political ideas: *“I’ve been searching, search, search/Time for old Wales to wake up/Time for old Wales to sink/Your attitude like glass under my feet/The corruptness that...flows in your blood/I’ve travelled the road too long/Cardiff to Anglesey/yawn fucking yawn.”* This song illustrates the desire for action in Wales. Y Cyrff express their distaste for the so-called “old Wales” which they believe is no longer representative of the concerns of its people. Conversely, The Stilletoes song “Cytgan” represents a pacifist take on the Welsh cause. They see the incompatibility of violence with the struggle for self-determination. Instead they advocate against racism, and propose to use “the language of heaven” (Welsh) constructively to create a free Wales: *“Use your language to move forward rather than hating...There’ll never be a free Wales if we all live like you.”*²⁴³ It is probable that this more pacifist trend will continue in the Cool Cymru music scene. According to Esyllt Williams, 15-20 years ago it was “a political thing singing in Welsh, and it was much more political. Cool Cymru has changed.”²⁴⁴ She argues that a transformation has occurred in recent years as new bands are now unwilling to be seen as having a political message.²⁴⁵ This is shown in an interview with the band Anweledig: *[Interviewer] “So singing in Welsh, to you, is not a political thing? You just do it because Welsh is your first language and it’s therefore natural for you to do it?”* *[Anweledig] “Yes!...But people turn it into politics...to us, it’s just us talking naturally.”*²⁴⁶ However, no matter their intention the fact remains that the Welsh language music scene is political as it “mov[es] away from the mainstream.”²⁴⁷

²⁴³ The Stilletoes, “Cytgan”.

²⁴⁴ Esyllt Williams, Interview.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Debs, “Interview with Anweledig,” *Welsh Bands Weekly*, (2001) <http://welshbandsweekly.com/english/articles/interviews/anweledig9half.html> (accessed 20 December, 2009).

²⁴⁷ Esyllt Williams, Interview.

Chapter 4.4 –Analysis of Survey Results

While an attempt was made to contact as many artists within the Welsh Language music scene as possible, only one band, the Racehorses, responded to the survey. The Racehorses are a popular pop Welsh language band. They are also quite a new group, which makes their answers reflective of the upcoming trends in Welsh-language music. Unfortunately, as there were no other respondents, a comparative analysis is not possible. Thus, the band's response as well as an interview conducted with Ms. Epyllt Williams of Community Music Wales will inform the analytical section of the Welsh music scene.

In the answer to “Why do you choose to sing in a minority language?” the Racehorses answered “because it is our 1st language, it's the language that we speak together and with friends.”²⁴⁸ This seems to be a general trend in both the Welsh language music, and in other minority language scenes. As the band also listed that they attended a minority-language school, and use Welsh “very often”, one can infer that the current promotion of Welsh-language education is succeeding in normalizing the language. This perhaps was not the case for bands in the early 1970-1980s, when the percentage of Welsh speakers was extremely low. The Racehorses also mention that a “tradition of Welsh language pop music”, specifically the Super Furry Animals, Gorke's Zygotic Mynchi and Catatonia, also influenced their decision to sing in Welsh. This shows the influential nature of the Cool Cymru movement on upcoming Welsh language acts.

As for Community Music Wales (CMW), they are influential in promoting the Welsh language through music. This is achieved through their Ciwdod programme. Ciwdod is funded by the Welsh Language Board, and encourages youths to speak in Welsh by concentrating on the use of language through music.²⁴⁹ CUDAD's work also includes helping organizations put on music gigs in Welsh. Community Music Wales also encourages the Welsh language through helping Welsh artists enter the industry, as well as releasing singles by new bands. What is particularly interesting about CMW is that it works to remove the social stigma of speaking a minority language: “Welsh is viewed amongst

²⁴⁸ Genevieve Wickenden, Minority Language Survey, Racehorses Respondent.

²⁴⁹ “Ciwdod,” Community Music Wales, [Online]

<http://www.communitymusicwales.co.uk/departments/ciwdod/> (accessed 18 December, 2009).

young people [as] “uncool” ...[CMW] is partly presenting them with other opportunities in Welsh.”²⁵⁰ CMW endeavors to show young people that Welsh is a living language, that “there is another world” which they can experience through the medium of Welsh.²⁵¹

The Racehorses also reflect current trends in the minority language music scene as they state there is no overtly political message in their lyrics, nor in their decision to sing in Welsh.²⁵² Conversely, in answer to the question on how they would define their identity, they state that they do identify as Welsh, and affirm that it plays “a subliminal role in the[ir] performance.”²⁵³ What was particularly interesting in their responses was that they talk about their excitement in performing throughout Europe, the United States and Japan. They argue that while “some Welsh bands are very comfortable playing in Wales alone-we however want to reach a wide audience, because we feel that our music is not defined by geographical or linguistic barriers.”²⁵⁴ This shows the outward-looking nature of current trends in Welsh music, as many artists are looking to succeed within and outside Wales. This is increasingly possible as performing in Welsh is no longer considered taboo.

According to Epyllt Williams, Community Music Wales has seen a rise in interest in the last few years, partly because of their work with some successful Welsh bands. This has allowed CMW to offer different kinds of activities which they can offer through the medium of Welsh.²⁵⁵ She notes that while Welsh will never be a mainstream language, the presence of Welsh in music is now a normalised thing. Moreover, she argues that maintaining Welsh in the music industry is crucial to sustaining the language, as music provides another facet of culture that people can get involved in.²⁵⁶ She contends “having music available in a language that you speak every day can only enhance your life as a Welsh person.” According to David Owens, a journalist who has written on the Welsh music scene, the Cool Cymru movement has had a tremendous effect on the Welsh language and culture. Today, Welsh bands no longer have to “prove themselves to an

²⁵⁰ Epyllt Williams, Interview.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Genevieve Wickenden, Minority Language Music Interview, Racehorses Respondent.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Epyllt Williams, Interview.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

international audience”, as Welsh is normalised in the industry.²⁵⁷ Owens asserts that the Welsh language music scene is changing, because the political grunt work has already been achieved by those in the early stages of the movement. Indeed, Cool Cymru has normalised the use of Welsh language in the music industry, as “now it’s not unusual to see Welsh acts in the music press and on radio and national TV-which is how it should be.”²⁵⁸

²⁵⁷ Owens, “The Rise of Welsh Rock and Pop.”

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

Chapter 5- Case Study Analysis and Concluding Remarks

The purpose of this work is to explain not only that minority language music is useful in its ability to preserve language, promote culture and politicise specific issues pertaining to minority rights. However, it must be understood that minority language music is an expansive movement, not isolated to the three main case studies outlined in this dissertation. The presence of minority language music scenes throughout Europe, illustrates this part of a larger trend in cultural revivalism. Moreover, minority language music is supported not only by a renewed interest in the study of vernacular languages and cultures, but also as a result of recent political changes affecting the European continent, namely the creation of the European Union. Thus, the growth minority language music reflects the new political reality of the European continent, specifically the focus on regionalism and regional identity. This is shown in the creation of minority language programmes aimed at the promotion and preservation of cultural diversity. These include the Liet International Song Contest, Voices of Europe and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

5.1-Minority Language Music in a Broader European Context

5.1.1- Liet International Song Contest

One programme which has been especially influential in promoting minority cultures and languages through the medium of music is the Liet International Song Contest. Begun as an experiment following the 10th anniversary of the successful Frisian Song Contest in 2001-2002, Liet International was created to offer a platform for the performance of European minority languages. The competition typically hosts 11 contestants from various European minority groups. In the past, some of the minority groups that have participated include the Sámi, Frisians, Welsh, Kashubian, Occitans, Corsicans, Friulians, Sorbians, and numerous others.

Liet is one of the largest pan-European events focused on the promotion of minority languages.²⁵⁹ While it was originally modeled after the Eurovision Song Contest, it has

²⁵⁹ Onno Falkena, *Interview by author*, Olomouc, Czech Republic, December 1st, 2009.

“grown to be the antithesis of...the Eurovision” festival as contestants are prohibited from singing in English.²⁶⁰ In fact, one of the main motivations for starting Liet was that it was in 2001-2002 that Eurovision became largely an English-language event.²⁶¹ The contest awards two prizes, one for the best song of the competition (jury award) and a people’s choice award.

One of the main goals of the contest is to offer minority language bands an international stage for the promotion of their music and their minority in general. Previous winners have been able to use the exposure gained from Liet to “make a step forward in [their] career”, which, “was exactly [the] intention.”²⁶² Moreover, the contest is not a one-day event, where “groups from all over Europe just [come] to sing for three and a half minutes”; Liet allows for participants to give 20-30 minute concerts so that they can present themselves *and* their minority better.²⁶³ This is enabled through the global broadcast of the contest, having been covered by international news networks such as CNN and BBC World, and promoted through Liet International’s youtube.com channel.

According to Onno Falkena, the festival organiser since 2002, Liet International Song Competition has grown into a true pan-European event. The contest has been hosted in Friesland and Sweden, while upcoming editions will take place in Inverness, Scotland (2010) and the Friulian region of Italy (2011).²⁶⁴ Moreover, the success of Liet has inspired several regional competitions where the winners of these contests go on to participate in the International Song Contest. This is generating further support for minority language music, and thus, exposure for European minority groups in general. Falkena argues that it is important for language to be both visible and for “interesting things [to] happen culturally” within a language. This requires political effort but also the initiative of the people themselves.²⁶⁵

²⁶⁰ Falkena, Interview.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

Chapter 5.1.2- Voices of Europe

The use of music to support minority languages is also the goal of the Voices of Europe Choir. Voices of Europe is a camp, organised yearly by the Youth of European Nationalities (YEN). During the week-long event, youths representing minority groups from all over Europe come together to form a single choir whose repertoire is composed of minority language songs. After extensive practice, the choir performs at a concert at the very end of the week. The programme is valuable as it encourages the use of minority languages themselves, and interregional cooperation between other threatened cultural groups.²⁶⁶ Voices of Europe is but one of the yearly highlights of the Youth of European Nationalities. Founded in 1984, YEN is a non-governmental umbrella network of 30 youth organizations spread over 17 states that works towards raising awareness on the interests of European minorities “by public relations and by participation in the decision making process.”²⁶⁷

Chapter 5.1.3- European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

One of the most important efforts made to the field of minority language preservation is undoubtedly the Council of Europe’s European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML). The Charter was opened for signatures on November 5th, 1992 and came into force March on March 1st, 1998. The purpose of the Charter is to “protect and promote region and minority languages as a threatened aspect of Europe’s cultural heritage” and to “enable speakers of a regional or minority language to use it in private and public life.”²⁶⁸ The Charter is an extensive document, separated into numerous components. In addition to Part I, the Charter contains a set of eight fundamental principles around which the State must base their policies (Part II). These principles are considered the foundation necessary for minority language preservation, and must be ratified by each signatory country. Part III of the Charter provides a choice of 68 concrete measures in the

²⁶⁶ “Portrait of Yen,” Youth of European Nationalities, [Online] <http://www.yeni.org/default.php?m=&l=english&s=&p=about/portrait.html> (accessed 18 December, 2009).

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ “European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages,” Council of Europe, [Online] http://www.coe.int/t/e/legal_affairs/local_and_regional_democracy/regional_or_minority_languages/1_The_Charter/_summary.asp#TopOfPage (accessed 19 December, 2009).

areas of education, judicial authorities, administrative authorities and public services, media, cultural activities and facilities, economic and social life and trans-frontier exchanges. Countries must apply a minimum of 35 measures, with at least three each from Articles 8 (education) and 12 (cultural activities), and at least one from Articles 9-11 and 13.²⁶⁹ The combination of Part II's fundamental principles and the concrete measures of Part III are designed to protect and promote regional and minority languages. Moreover, the Council of Europe's Committee of Experts evaluates the progress of signatory states every three years to ensure that they are fulfilling their obligations under the Charter.

All three case studies examined in this dissertation are well-protected under the Charter. The Basque minority, considered a territorial language, is protected under both Part II and III of the ECRML. Spain's obligations under the Charter for the Basque minority entered into effect on August 1, 2001. The Netherlands on the other hand, was one of the first countries to sign and ratify the Charter. Under ECRML, the Frisian minority is well-protected under Part II and III, as of March 1, 1998. The Welsh minority is also secured under both Part II and III of the Charter, which went into force on July 1, 2001. However, while ECRML is very effective in promoting and preserving minority languages, the three case studies were already well-protected even before the Charter. Nevertheless, the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages is an effective covenant, especially in terms of its emblematic value.

Chapter 5.2- Analysis of Results

As the threat of extinction is an ever-present reality, minority languages and cultures are turning to alternative methods to help protect their distinctive identity. As music naturally forms an integral part of culture, using it as a mobilising force to protect cultural and linguistic minorities seems a natural fit. Through the systematic analysis of the Basque, Frisian and Welsh experiences, it is evident that minority language music is useful not only for its aesthetic value, but also in its potential as a genuine social movement. The cultural value of music lies in its ability to "stimulate reflection on the respective

²⁶⁹ Jean-Marie Woehrling, *The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages: A Critical Commentary*, (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2005), 29

community's history, its achievements and its future potential.”²⁷⁰ Music therefore, is able to preserve, promote and politicise the language, culture and concerns of the minority group in which it is created. However, minority language movements, by their very nature, are not static. Their goals, objectives and meanings naturally change over time, reflecting the needs of the minority group in question. This is seen in the shifting character of the minority language music scenes in the Basque, Frisians and Welsh minorities since the 1960s.

Firstly, minority language music by its very nature emphasises linguistic preservation. Indeed, all of the case studies' hold language as core to their cultural identity. In the Basque and Welsh cases moreover, their languages were in considerable danger less than 50 years ago. Minority language music therefore, functioned as a method of calling attention to the issue, and prompting change to the situation. Moreover, in all three cases, artists perpetuate their minority language through their music, whether this is consciously done or not. In the case of the Basque minority, individuals at the beginning of the Radical Rock movement purposely attended adult language classes in order to learn Euskera. The preservation of language is also shown to be key in the Welsh experience. In the Frisian case however, artists consistently state that they are not “soldiers for their language”. This is perhaps not necessary as the Frisian language is one of the least endangered minority tongues in Europe. This being said, current trends in bilingual education are helping to reverse the language shift in all three case studies. It is expected that if the popularisation of minority-language education continues, future generations will be increasingly fluent in their traditional minority tongue. While these languages will never be mainstream, the availability of education in Welsh, Frisian and Basque will preserve these languages from extinction. This will in fact change one of the original purposes of minority language music movements as there will be increasingly less of an active need to promote language.

Secondly, minority language music scenes in the Basque, Frisian and Welsh experience helped to promote their culture both within and outside their borders. In the Basque case, music is shown to be a platform for the promotion of ‘Basqueness’. Moreover, Basque radical rock's purposeful connections with other minority struggles, displayed explicitly in their lyrics and with the infusion of other musical genres associated

²⁷⁰ Konstanze Glazer, *Minority Languages and Cultural Diversity in Europe: Gaelic and Sorbian Perspectives*, (Toronto: Multilingual Matters Ltd, 2007), 219.

with other cultures. The Frisian language music scene is also interested in promoting the Frisian minority, but in a less vivid way. The Frisian minority uses music more as a shared cultural experience. This is shown in particular by Nynke Laverman's incorporation of Portuguese musical elements into her work. While the promotion of Welshness was important for minority language music in Wales, it was for different reasons than the Frisian and Basque examples. The Cool Cymru movement was especially useful as it helped to ameliorate the international opinion of Welsh culture, which was previously believed to be uninventive and dull.

Where the Basque, Frisian and Welsh cases deviate most noticeably is their use of politics as part of their minority language music. This is explained by the political situation of the minority within the region. According to Eurominority, an organisation dedicated to the investigation of linguistic minorities throughout the European continent, the Basque, Frisian and Welsh peoples all represent three different types of minorities. In their rankings, Eurominority identified three main political categories for linguistic minority groups: no-conflict, political conflict and separatist tendencies.²⁷¹ In the Netherlands, the Frisian minority have a strong sense of autonomy, an independence to which they hold fast. While they are arguably in search of further autonomy from the Dutch state, there are no political conflicts within the region. This explains the general apolitical nature of Frisian language music, and the insistence by numerous artists that their music was not meant to have a political message. One can infer that perhaps one of the major reasons why the minority language music scene in Friesland is not overtly political is that the Frisians themselves do not feel threatened by the Dutch state. They feel secure in their situation, and thus, have no need to assert politics within Frisian-language music.

Wales is also considered a linguistic minority in search of greater autonomy, but unlike the Frisians, there is evidence of political conflict. In the past, the Welsh minority has been quite vocal in regards to the desire for increased autonomy, which it was finally granted with the formation of the Welsh Assembly in 1999. The devolution of 1999 marks a turnaround in the Welsh language music scene as there was less of a need to call for political action, as some degree of autonomy had already been granted. The decline of a

²⁷¹ "Minority by Type of Conflict," *Eurominority*, [Online] www.eurominority.eu/ 20 December, 2009.

marked political element in Welsh language movement since 2000 is indicative of this trend. According to Emyllt Williams, devolution has created massive changes in the normalisation of Welsh, as it is “much more visually required”. This means that as many jobs now require fluency in Welsh there is a rise in the numbers of people learning it; precipitating its stabilisation.²⁷² While devolution has brought many positive changes for the Welsh minority, outside immigration to Welsh, is precipitating challenges to Welsh language communities. Thus, while the Welsh Assembly has satisfied some of the needs of early Welsh nationalists, the Welsh language still faces many challenges. No doubt, this will contribute to the continued (albeit lessened) political nature of Welsh language music.

In the case of the Basque people, Eurominority classifies them as a minority in search of independence. This means that there are those within the Basque Country who want to separate from the Spanish (and French) state, combining the Basque provinces into one nation. These separatist tendencies have been marked by ETA terrorist activity and to some extent by the political parties within the Basque Country itself. It is important to note that while many within the Basque Country are in favour of further autonomy, the militant terrorist activity is not condoned by the majority of Basque people. The complex nature of Basque politics is also reflected in its minority language music scene. While some artists gladly took on the *abertzale* label, others shied away from it, worried that they were being used as political pawns. Research shows that the Basque minority language music is extremely political and it is likely that this trend will continue for some time.

Using the New Social Movement Theory in reference to the Basque, Frisian and Welsh minority language music scenes, reveals a variety of important issues. Firstly, minority language music scenes can be considered as genuine social movements. Secondly, the application of NSM theory to the minority language music scenes of all three case studies reveals that while the Basque and Welsh case studies can be considered as strong social movements, the Frisian example is largely excluded from this association. This is due to the fact that perhaps the Frisian minority feels (less) endangered than its Basque and Welsh counterparts. It is probable that should there be a reversal in language and cultural policy negatively affecting the Frisian minority, this would indeed change the nature and

²⁷² Emyllt Williams, *Interview*.

the tone of their music scene. Moreover, while Basque Radical Rock was and continues to be a strong social movement, it is less clear whether the Cool Cymru scene will remain a social movement for much longer. Already there has been a marked decline in the artists' reflecting Welsh nationalist sentiment in their work. Thus, while the Cool Cymru scene was indeed a social movement, it is probable that this political need will slowly decline.

In conclusion, the use of music by the Basque, Frisian and Welsh people has paved the way for a new era in the struggle of minority cultures. Through the Basque Radical Rock, Frisian and Cool Cymru scenes, music became a means of protecting, preserving and promoting the struggles of minorities to safeguard their language, culture and to advance their own political objectives. Consequently, music has become a platform for the Basque, Frisian and Welsh minorities, as it has introduced whole generations to their cause, enabling them to cry out "We're Still Here!" despite of everything, despite of everyone.

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Appendix A

Minority Language Music Survey

1) What is the name of your band?

2) What genre would you classify the music that your band performs?

- a) Folk
- b) Rock
- c) Pop
- d) Metal
- e) Hip-Hop
- f) Other (please specify) _____

3) What country/region are you from?

4) What language(s) does your band perform in?

5) If your band performs in a minority language, is there a particular reason why you do?

6) Is there a message in your music you are trying to convey? If so, please elaborate.

7) What is the goal of your music (if any)?

8) What kind of audience do you want to reach and why?

9) How would you define your own identity? Does it play a part in the music you perform?

10) What kind of school do/did you attend?

- Minority-language only school (classes are taught primarily in a minority language)
- Immersion school (classes are taught using both minority and state language)
- State-language school (classes are taught predominantly in the state language)
- I learned my minority language through an after-school programme
- Other (please specify)

11) Where do you use your minority language? Check all that apply.

- At home
- At school
- At work
- Other (please specify)

12) How often do you use your minority language?

- Very often (4-5 or more times a week)
- Sometimes (3-4 times a week)
- Occasionally (1-2 times a week)
- Rarely (less than once a week)
- I do not use my minority language on a regular basis

13) Additional Comments:

Thank you for your time and participation!

Appendix B

Sondage de Musique Minoritaire

1) Quel est le nom de votre groupe de musique?

2) Quel genre classeriez-vous la musique que votre groupe produit?

- a) Folk
- b) Rock
- c) Pop
- d) Métal
- e) Hip-Hop
- f) Autres (s'il vous plait, précisez)

3) De quel pays/de quelle région êtes-vous ?

4) Quel sont les language(s) que ton groupe musicale joue des piece de dans?

5) Si votre group chante dans une langue minoritaire, y a-t-il une raison particulière pourquoi vous le faites?

6) Est-ce que il y a un message dans votre musique que vous essayez de transmettre?
Si oui, s'il vous plaît précisez.

7) Quel est le but de votre musique?

8) Quel genre de public voulez-vous attirer et pourquoi?

9) Comment définiriez-vous votre propre identité? Est-ce que votre identité joue un rôle dans votre musique?

10) Quel et la type d'école est-ce que vous (avez) fréquenté(e)?

- École de langue minoritaire (les classes sont enseignées principalement dans une langue minoritaire)
- École d'immersion (les cours sont enseignés en utilisant la langue nationale et la langue minoritaire)
- École d'État (les cours sont donnés principalement dans la langue de l'État)
- J'ai appris la langue minoritaire avec une programma hors de l'école.
- Autres (s'il vous plaît précisez)

11) Où utilisez-vous votre langue minoritaire? Cochez toutes les réponses qui s'appliquent.

- À la maison
- À l'école
- Au travail
- Autre (préciser s'il vous plaît)

12) Combien de fois par semaine utilisez-vous votre langue minoritaire?

- Très souvent (4-5 fois ou plus par semaine)
- Quelquefois (3-4 fois par semaine)
- De temps en temps (1-2 fois par semaine)
- Rarement (moins qu'une fois par semaine)
- Je n'utilise pas ma langue de la minorité sur une base régulière

Merci beaucoup pour votre aide!